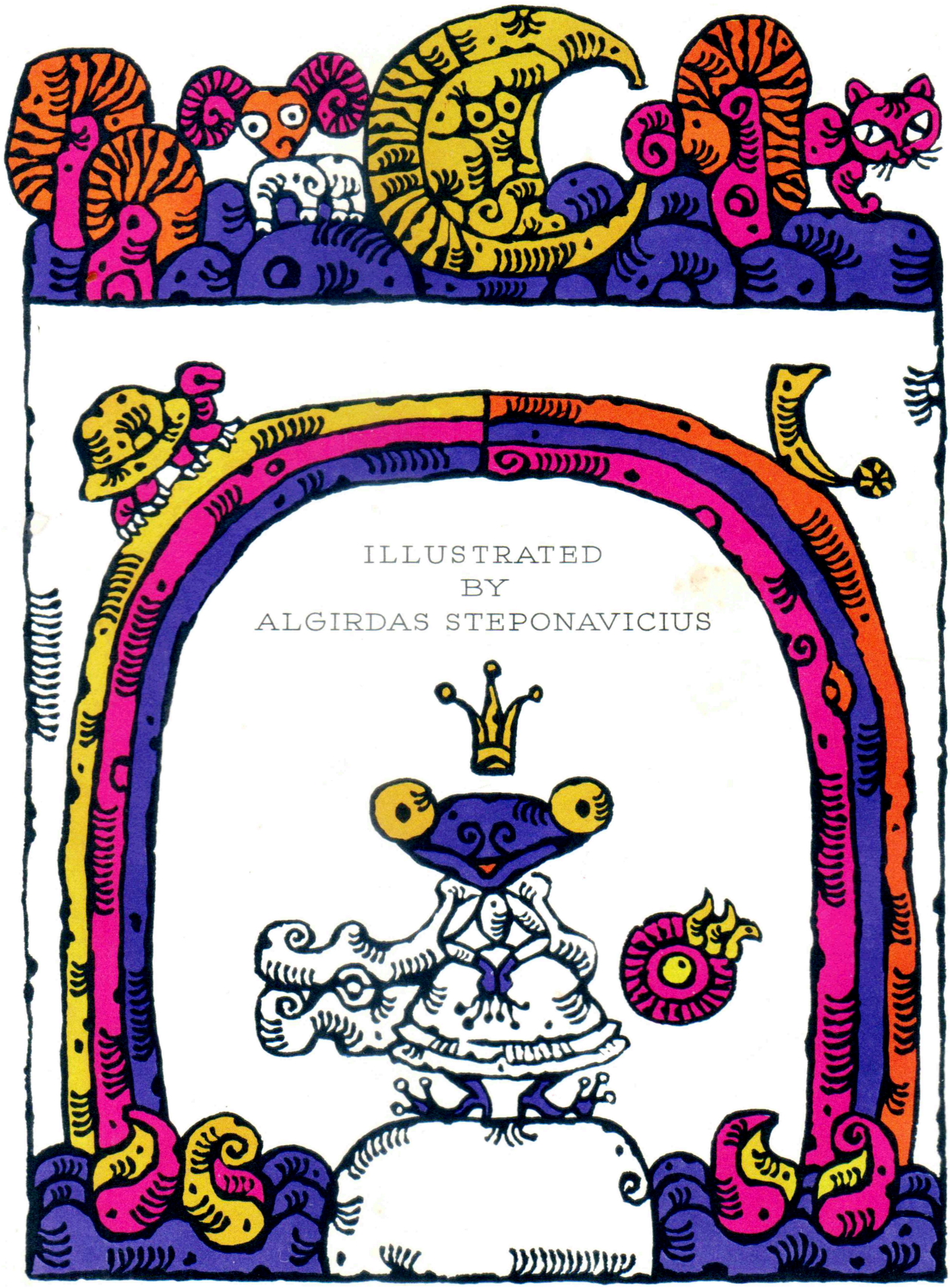
KOSTAS KUBILINSKAS

THE FROG QUEEN


ILLUSTRATED
BY
ALGIRDAS STEPONAVICIUS

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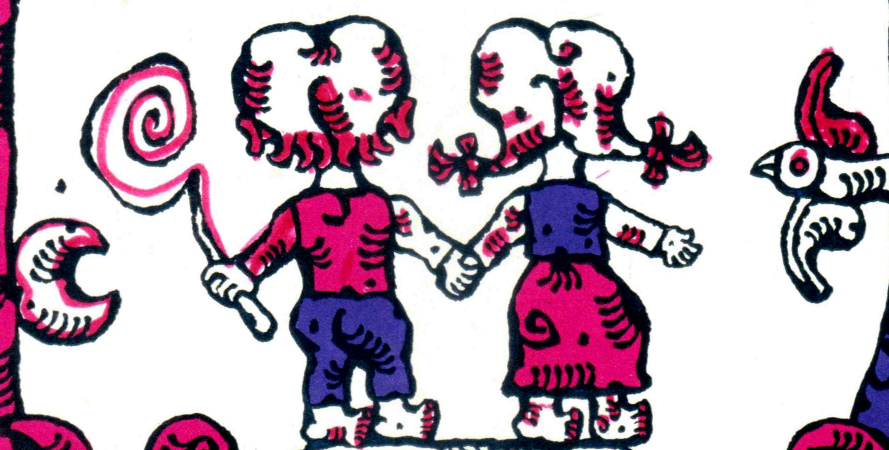


PROGRESS
PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

THE OLD SHEPHERD SAT IN THE BRACKEN
WEAVING A BASKET OF WILLOW.
"GRANDFATHER, STOP WEAVING YOUR
BASKET.
PLEASE STOP IT AND TELL US A STORY!"
THE GRANDFATHER TWIRLED HIS
MOUSTACHE
AND CALLED THE CHILDREN ABOUT HIM,
SAT DOWN ON A STUMP,
LIT HIS PIPE AND PUFFED IT:
"IF YOU GIVE ME A BASKET OF BERRIES,
THEN I WILL TELL YOU A STORY!"
"DONE, GRAN'DAD–A BASKET OF
BERRIES
FOR YOU IN EXCHANGE FOR A STORY!
FULL OF GOOD THINGS
LIKE A LADLE . . .
A LONG, LONG STORY
LIKE A RIVER-REED . . ."

MERRY STORIES

Shuldu-buldu!
Kakareeko!
What has happened,
How it happened,
What has happened!
Read and see, dear!

THE FROG QUEEN

All the frogs are croaking,
Mournful choirs convoking
For the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Who's to wed the King.

Why such agitation,
Mournful lamentation
In the bog's recesses?
For the frog-princess is
Going to be your Queen!

How should we ignore it?
Deeply we deplore it!
How should we rejoice
When the old king's choice
Fell on her—the fairest of the fair!

Eyes so blithely winking,
Button-round and blinking,
Dark as the slime,
Green as the lime;
Figure sweetly swollen,
Tightly-blown abdomen;
Cabbage-green her face—oh!
And—a thrilling basso
Her nightingale's voice.

Old-maid frogs—what slander!—
Say her legs are bandy.
See how they dance though,
See how they prance, though,
Outleaping the grasshopper . . .

Hear the capercailye,
Envoy round of belly,
Gabbling specious
And facetious
Praises of his king.

"Golden-crowned! Shell-plated!
What a turtle! Fêted,
Wise and wealthy,
Strong and healthy,
A mere centenarian!

Could be on the old side,
Could be on the slow side,
But the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Will soon have him dancing.

Then—the compensations!
Wealth past contemplation —
All the hussocks,
All the tussocks,
Of the far-flung marshlands. . . ."

Crouched in brackish water
Old frogs croak disaster;
Say the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Should not wed the king.

"Not for him," they grumble,
"To wed a giddy youngster!
Some more dignified
And maturer bride
Would suit our sleepy king."

Like as not she'd tarry,
Yet before she marry
Were the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Not concerned about the coffers.

All the reeds are talking!
All the ducks are squawking
That the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Is to wed the king.

Old-maid frogs arraign her,
Oh, how they disdain her,
Full of indignation
That her rise in station
Left them on the shelf still.

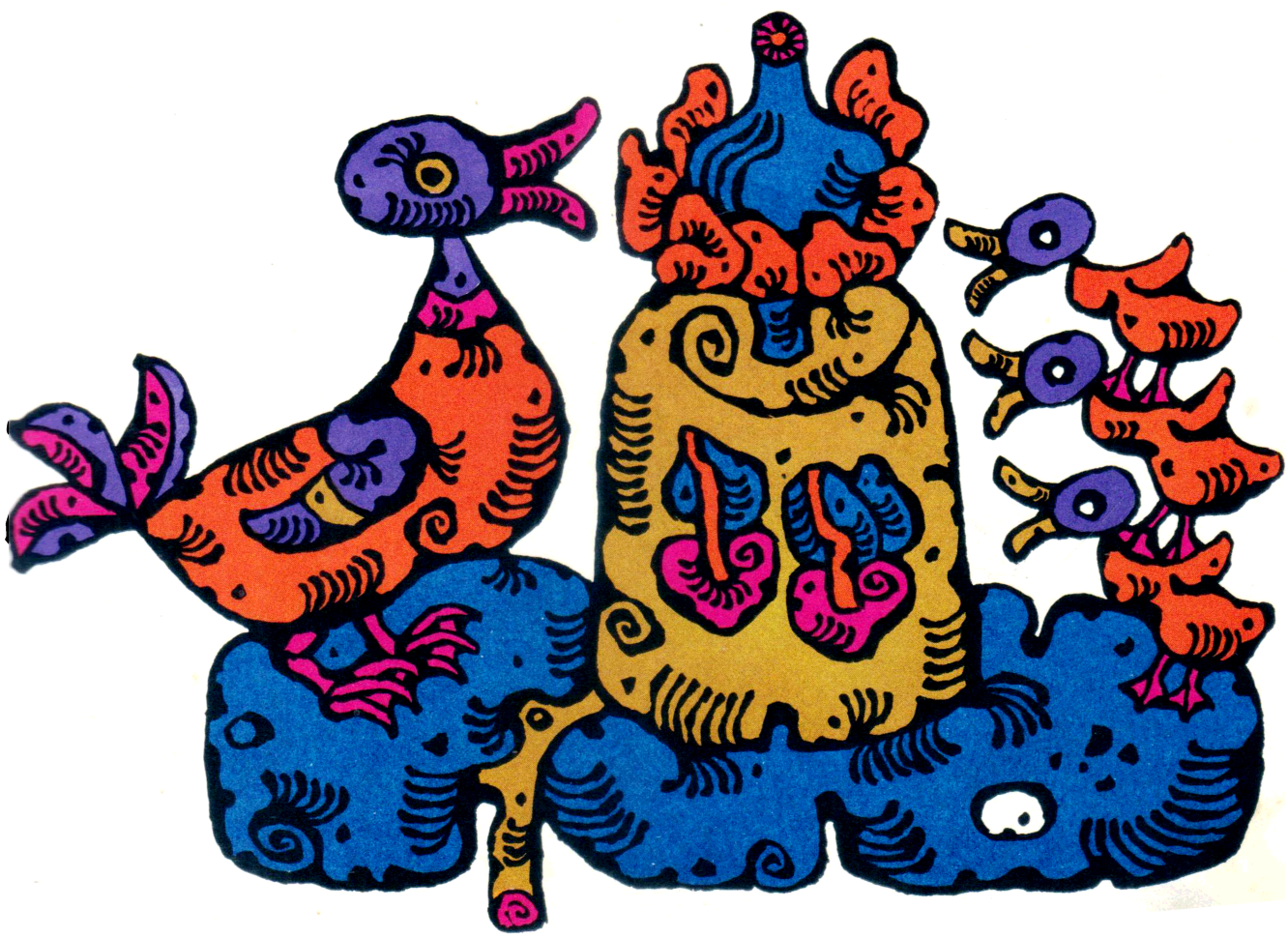
Came the spider, offering
Best spun silk and proffering
Veil and trimmings
Lacy, shimmering
To the bride, the frog-princess . . .

With wondrous
Agility
Speed and
Ability
Tiny spiders
For the bride her
Wedding veil wove that night.

Then the crayfish-cutters
And the hedgehog-fitters
Came to snip and pin
The frog-princess in
A robe of cloth-of-gold.

All the frogs plumped forward,
Claiming in chorus,
The right to attend
Their princess and friend,
But she chose the wild duck.

Mother Duck went quacking
Off about collecting
Weeds and gnats to make
The royal wedding cake
Which she baked on a green leaf.



From beneath a plantain
Father Duck was wanting
To know why the bill
Of the old king was still
So underdeveloped.

"Shame on you, good mallard!
The bride's friend—such a dullard!
Not to know what a turtle
Born in the purple
Really looks like—for shame!

Quack-quack—how embarrassing!
Waddle-waddle—how harassing!
Like a shield upturned,
Or that nicely burned,
Clay-smeared piecrust I baked!"

Beetle twirls his moustaches:
"In that case the laugh is
On the frog-princess,
Silly bog-princess
To wed a clay-smeared piecrust!"

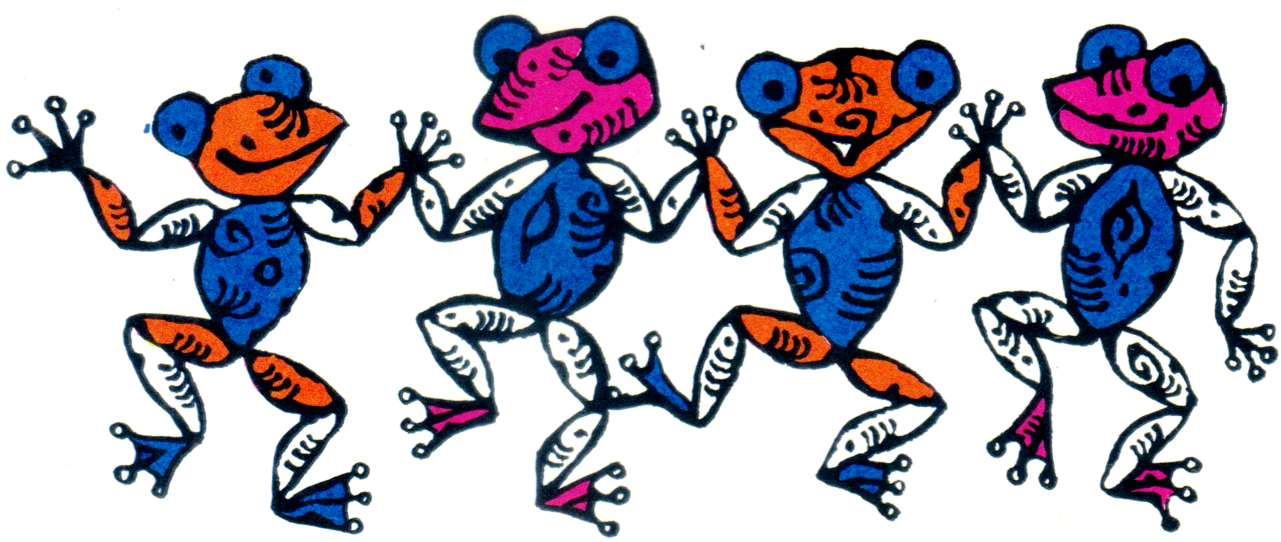
Then the marsh-crier,
The black-cock, flew skyward
To call in the guests
From East and from West
And from all the marshlands:

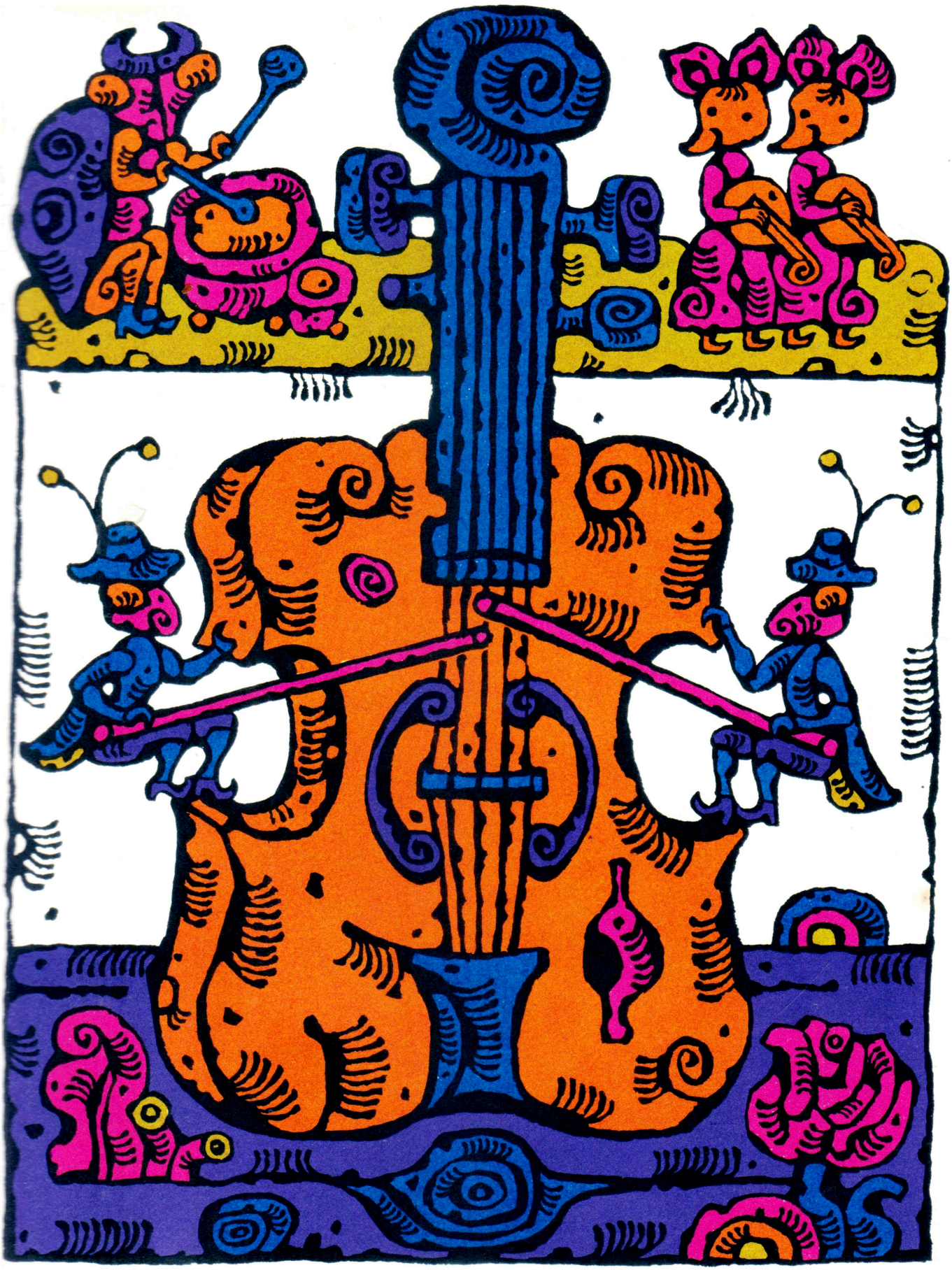
"Come from West and East
Join the wedding feast!
There'll be wedding cake
And pie home-baked
By the bride's friend, the wild duck!"

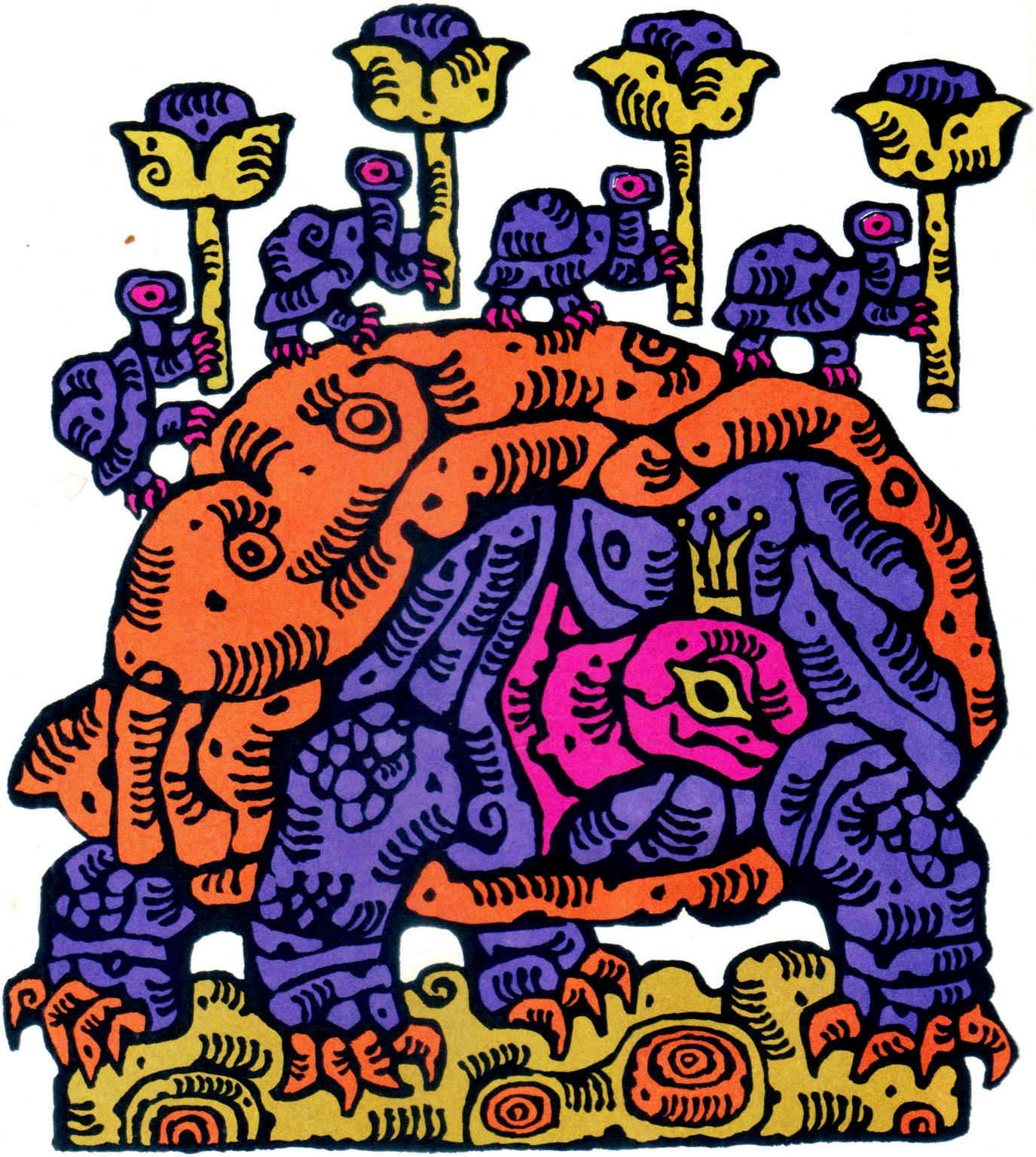
Beetles, day and night unresting,
Scuttle through the grass a-questing
For a musician.
Their one acquisition
Maestro Cricket—and family!

No sooner does their music sound
Than the frogs come hopping round
Open-mouthed, ravished . . .
Even the rabbits
Say the crickets never played so well!

Froggy pairs are prancing,
Through the marshes dancing,
Turtles bumble,
Crayfish stumble
Through the gay dance figures.







Dancing sun from sky
Trampling wood-swamp dry,
They footed and thumped it.
Some blew the trumpet,
Some of them banged on the drums.

Then, beneath an awning,
Stepped the bride adorning,
Radiant, pale,
Our marsh nightingale,
To be pelted with hops and honey . . .

But there she stood, alas, poor lady,
Lonely midst the festal debris:
"Say, where is he
Who's to marry me?
Where is my bridegroom?"

Where indeed? Ah—getting ready
At a pace so staid and steady
That the frog-princess,
Pretty bog-princess
Grew old as she waited.

Finally he came
His young bride to claim
With no pomp or state
One hundred years late
Dithering through the marshes.

Of all charms divested,
Quite uninterested
His frog-princess,
Poor old bog-princess.
Dozed at the water's edge.

Up the king came wading:
"Tell me please, old lady,
Where is my bride,
Queen of my wide
Realm of bogs and marshes?"

Age notwithstanding,
She woke up and lammed him,
Sent his crown sparkling
Down to the darkling
Depths of the quagmire . . . .

Picked a switch of feather grasses,
Chased the monarch through the marshes!
But the crown
Sunk deep down . . .
All the frogs went after it.

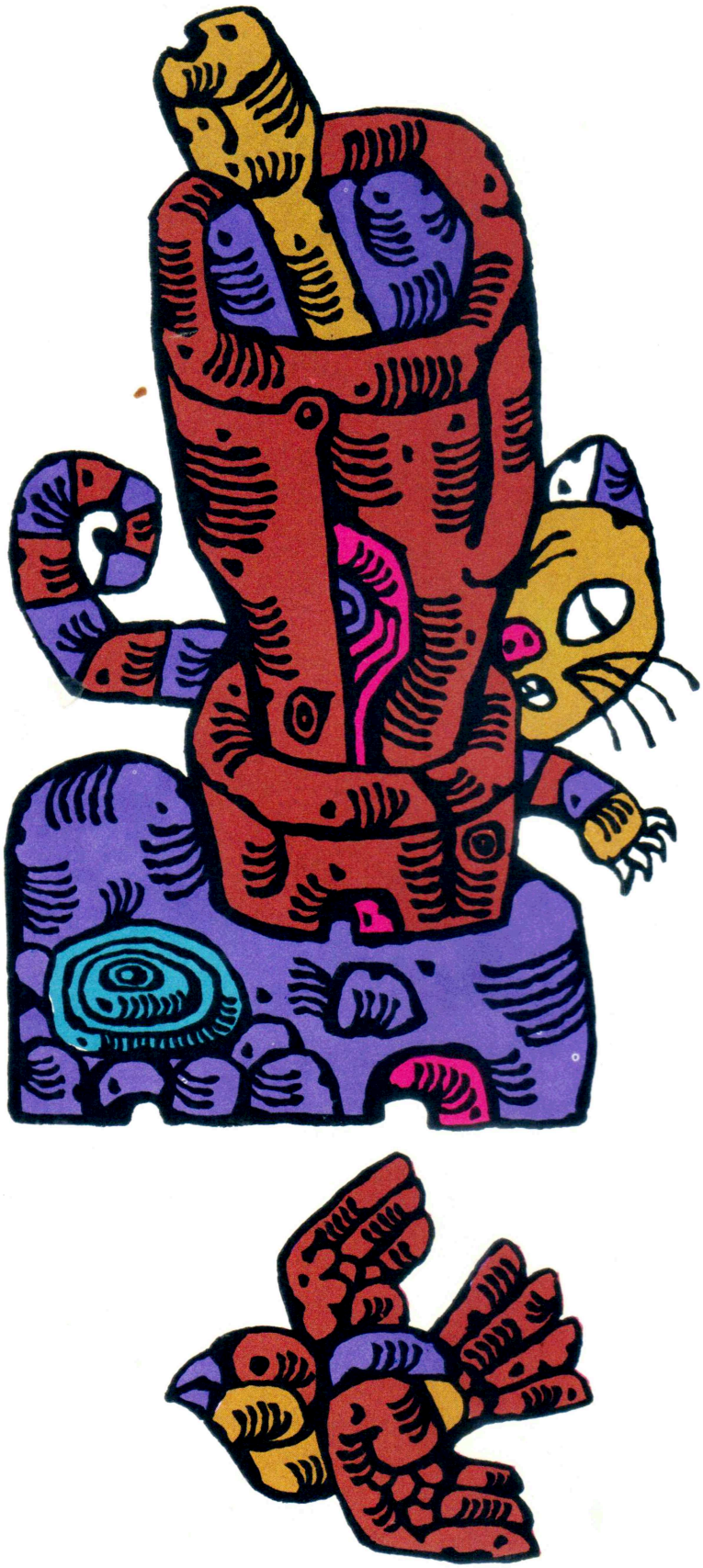
All the frogs went diving,
The King, still a-wiving,
Promised most kindly
To marry the finder,
But the marshes had swallowed it.

THE UNWASHED, UNSHAVEN CAT

Here he comes
The green-eyed
Predatory
Flame-eyed CAT.
Concentration!
See, he's watching
Fighting sparrows
Swift paw scotching
One small sparrow.
Howz-at!
Exhortation:
"Little sparrow
This'll teach you!
No more fighting."
Purring, throaty:
"Lovely pickings
On this poultry . . .
A bit of wing
Won't come amiss,
It's a long time now
Since I came across
A dish like this."

Sparrow flutters
Chirrup-chirrup!
Words of wisdom
Sparrow utters:
"Listen, listen,
Clever cat!
Geese wash,
Ducks wash;
Think of that!
Only you,
You handsome tabby,
Go black as soot,
Unwashed and shabby.
If you don't wash
Before you eat,
You never will
Enjoy your meat!"

What disgrace!
Pussy spread his
Stripey tail and
Sat him down to
Wash his face
With both his paws . . .
The sparrow lightly
Fluttered up and
Waved his tail from
Out of reach
Of Pussy's jaws . . .
Then Pussy swore
A solemn oath



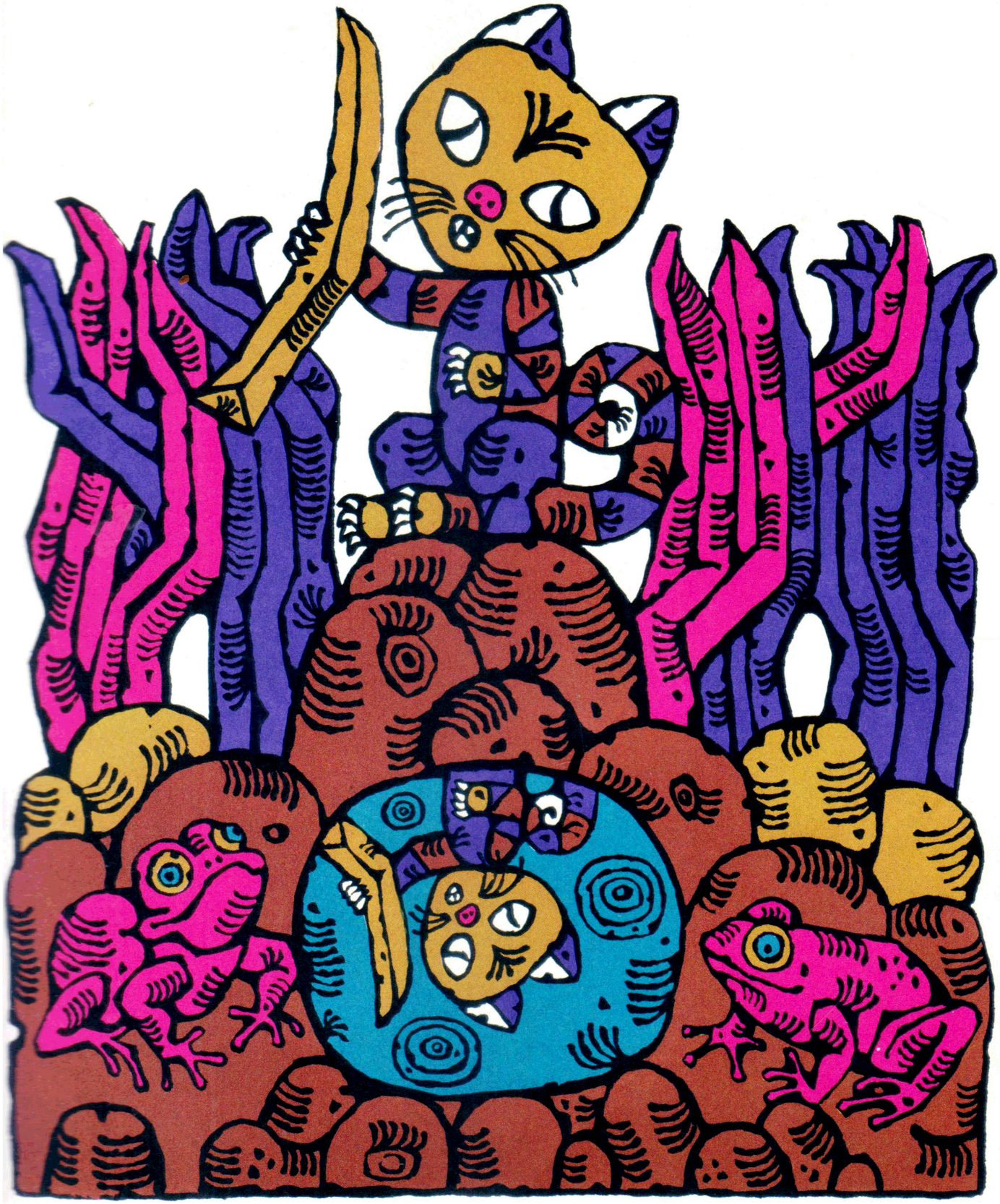
To wash no more
As he'd been taught
Before his dinner
Until such time,
As he had caught
That tricksy sparrow!

But—alas—he never thought,
How bad the habit,
Stupid fellow!

*

Once again
The cat's out hunting
Stripey tail
A-trail behind him.
See, he's watching
Plovers fighting,
Swift paw scotching
One of them.
A hit?
"Peewhit-peewhit,"
The plover cried.
The cat, with pardonable pride,
Miaowed and gloated:
"Plover, plover,
I'm a lover
Of fresh poultry
So—
crested friend—
Prepare to die!"

"Oh-Oh-Oh!
You sharp-eyed cat,
You are mighty,
Bold and brazen—



But surely you
Don't eat unshaven?
Never ever!
Never ever!
Did I see
So shabby,
So filthy
A Tabby?!
Take a look in the mirror!
Even
The frogs are clean shaven!"
And the plover collapsed with laughter,
"Who *do* you think *you* are?"

What a disgrace!
Pussy rushed to
The dark, still pool
To see his face
And began to shave
With a bulrush blade.
Suddenly—the plover
Spread her wings
And fluttered
Out of his reach
Into the sky,
Nodding her crest
As she flew by

Over the marshes
Far too far
For Puss to catch.
So again he swore
A solemn oath
To shave no more,
As he'd been taught
Before his dinner,
Till he'd caught
The plover's children.

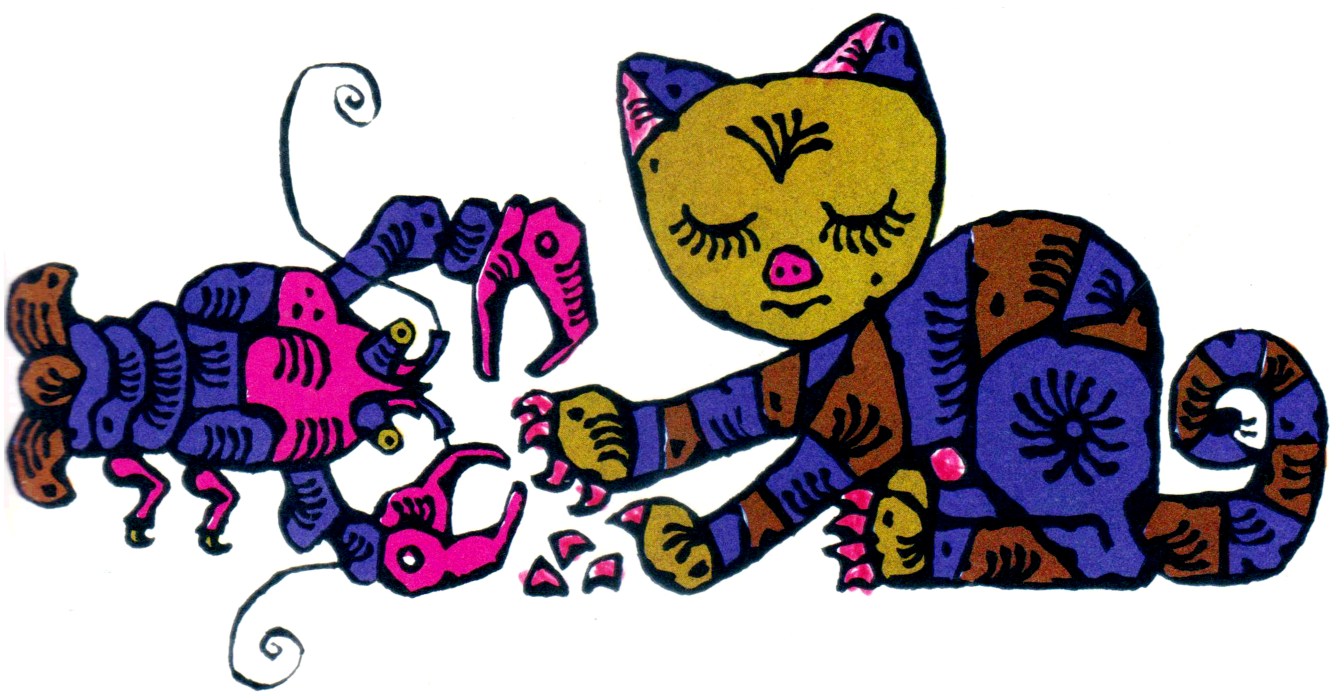
But—alas—he never thought,
The silly fool,
How bad the habit!

*

Yet again
The cat's out hunting,
Stripey tail
Behind him trailing,
Now he's sitting by the river.
He's hooked a crayfish
For his dinner:

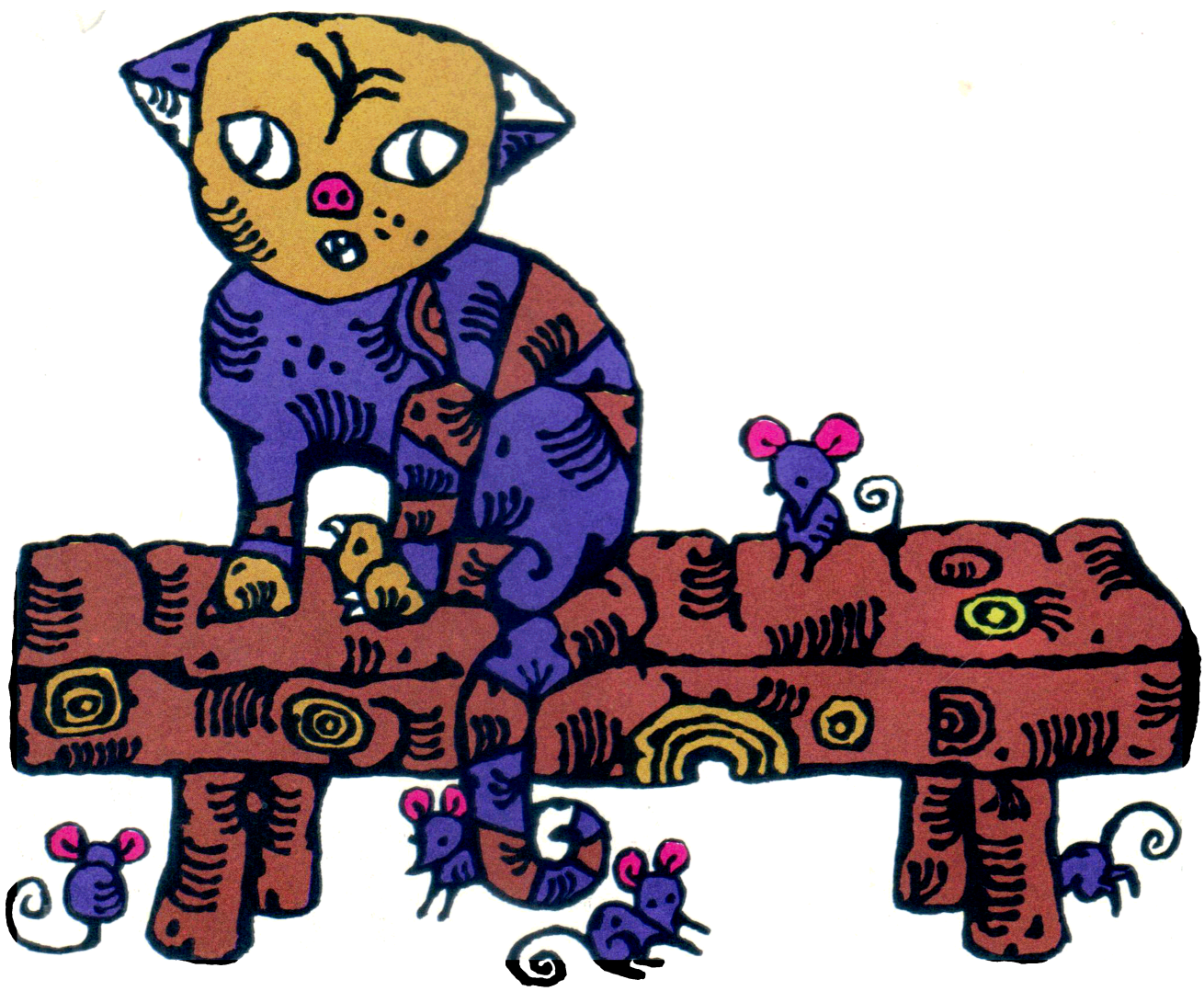
"I shall not wash,
I shall not shave
Until this crayfish
Safe I have
Inside me. First
A claw I'll tear off
As I would bite
A mouse's ear off."

But the crayfish
Backs away,
Upbraids poor Pussy!
"Oh, your nails,
Your nails,
Your nails!
When *did* you last cut them?
Shame on you, Pussy,
Or have you no scissors?!"
"None," said poor Pussy.
"Come, let *me* cut them.
We'll sit in the shade
And I'll do the paring
Then you can eat me."



"All right, then, get shearing,"
Miaowed the good cat,
"For I can't be content
Till my dinner is made."
Glancing at the
Crayfish claws,
The cat stretched out
His own poor paws
And shut his eyes tight
For fear it would hurt.
The crayfish was quick.
Its claws went snick-snick.
Then splash with the parings—
Into the stream.
"What's that?"
Said the cat
And shot out a paw
To retrieve his lost dish,
But it slipped on the back
Of the slippery fish
Who just flicked its tail
And was gone.

So once again
Green eyes has sworn
Never to stay,

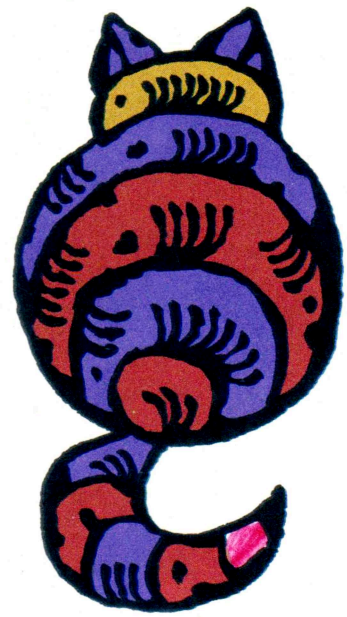


Before eating his prey,
For a nice manicure,
As everyone ought.

Stupid old cat,
He never thought,
How unsanitary
Was the habit!

The predatory
Cat
Dilatory
Sits
Paws crossed,
Still and stiff,
Purring,
Dozing
All lost.

He looks in the stream
His whiskers
Are sheared,
And not only his whiskers,
His nails, too,
Are pared.
He is *not* at ease,
Not best pleased.
That's what comes
Of *not* catching mice
Of poaching birds,
Stealing,
And not being nice
To the things he caught.



He miaows,
Knits his brows,
Can't think what he ought
To do next.
But you take note,
Children all!
Big and small!
Cats *should* be punished
And made to look silly,
Who get in the habit
Of acting the bully,
Like this lazy, old, brazen,
Unwashed and unshaven,
Shabby old,
Tabby old
CAT.

THE WOLF WHO LOST HIS TAIL

Once a tailor
Went a walking,
When to meet him
There came stalking
An old, grey wolf,
Who'd missed his kill.
Else had he been there
Walking still

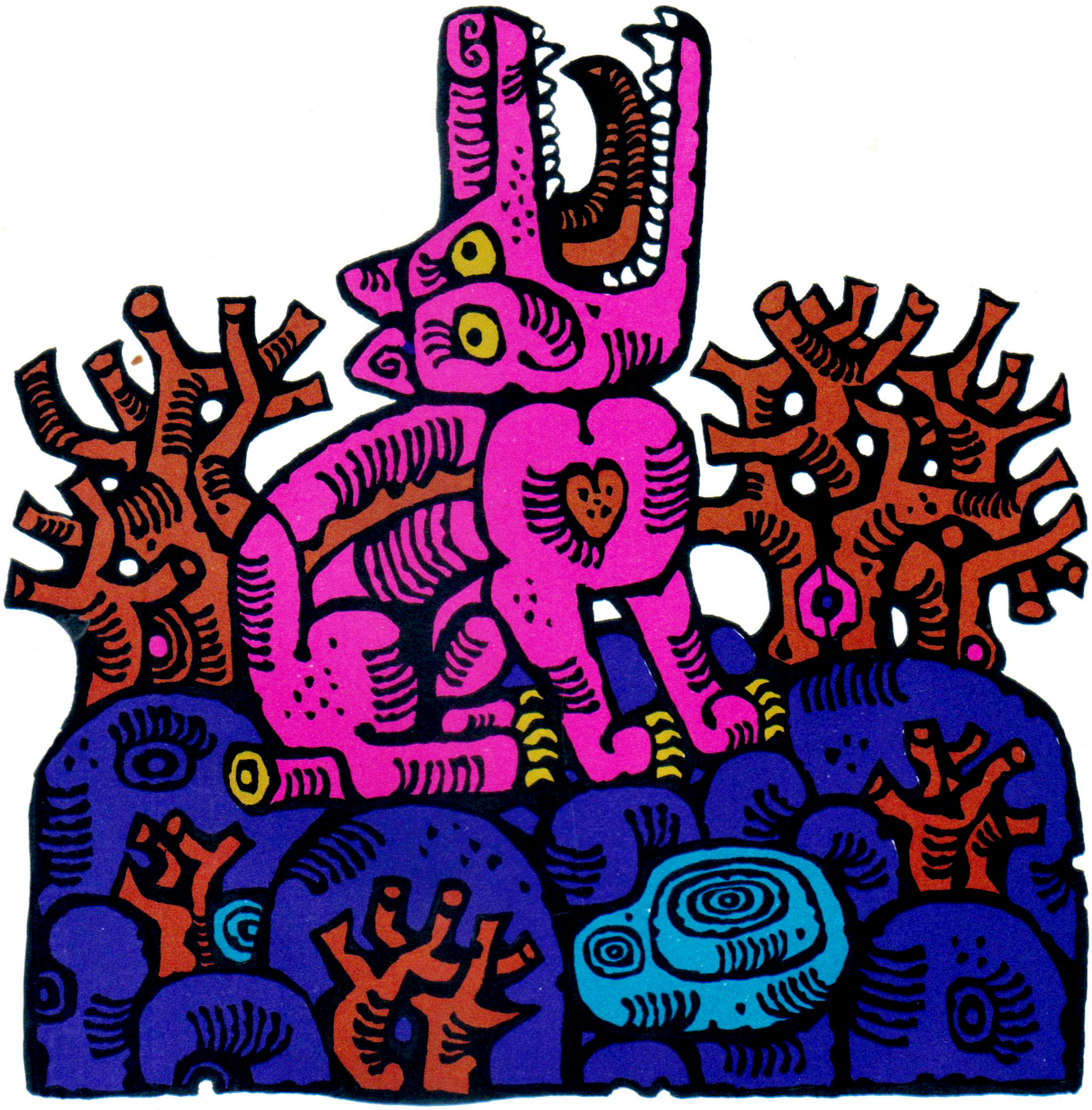
"Little man,
I'll eat you up!
And when of you I've had my sup,
I'll take my ease
Upon my rump
And blow the horn
On yonder stump."

So said Grey Wolf
To our poor tailor,
With drooling tongue
And jaws a-slaver.

"Dear sir, mine
Will be the pleasure!
First, though, let me
Take your measure:
Should your stomach
Prove capacious
Enough for me.
T'would be ungracious,
Good Sir, to
Balk your appetite!"

Grey Wolf snapped
His jaws shut tight
Just to show
He'd not relented
And to the tailor's
Trick consented:
"Measure, tailor,
If you must,
Whether you
Will make me bust.
But for myself,
I'm well aware
Just how much room
I've got in there!"

He clapped his belly,
But the tailor
Skipped round him
Nimbly as a sailor



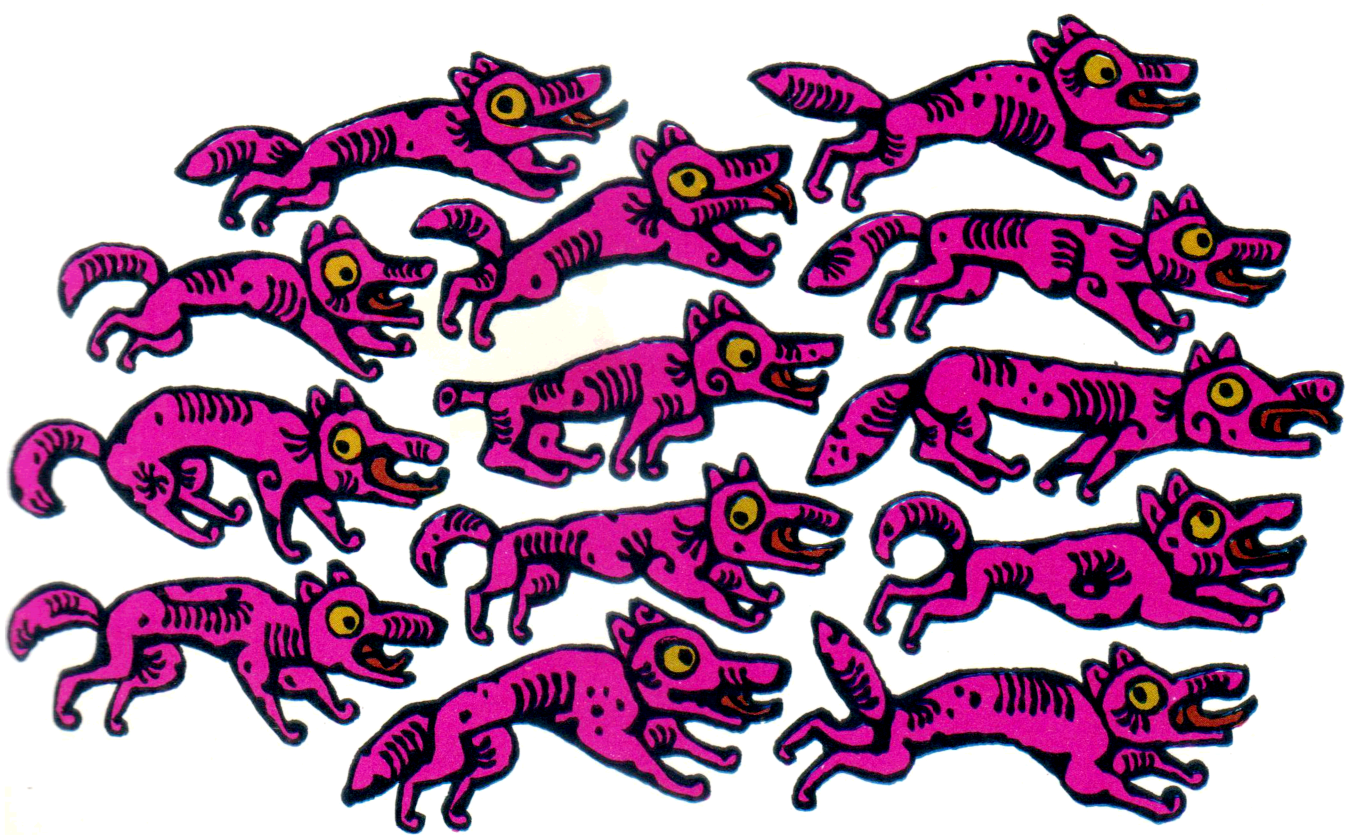
Round a bollard,
Till he was hanging
On to his tail.
Then—what a banging
That old wolf got!
The whole night through
The lame wolf yowled
And pulled and howled:
"Oo-oo-oo-oo!
Oh, loose me, do!"
At last he cried:
"Take my tail,
Don't tan my hide!"
So the tailor

Took his shears
And chopped his tail off
Then and there.

Grey Wolf shuddered,
Shag coat staring.
Then off he's rushing
—See him rushing!—
Down the clearing.

Safe beneath
The forest branches,
Squatting on his
Tail less haunches,
Grey Wolf calls up
All the others.
The pack comes padding
Round their brother,

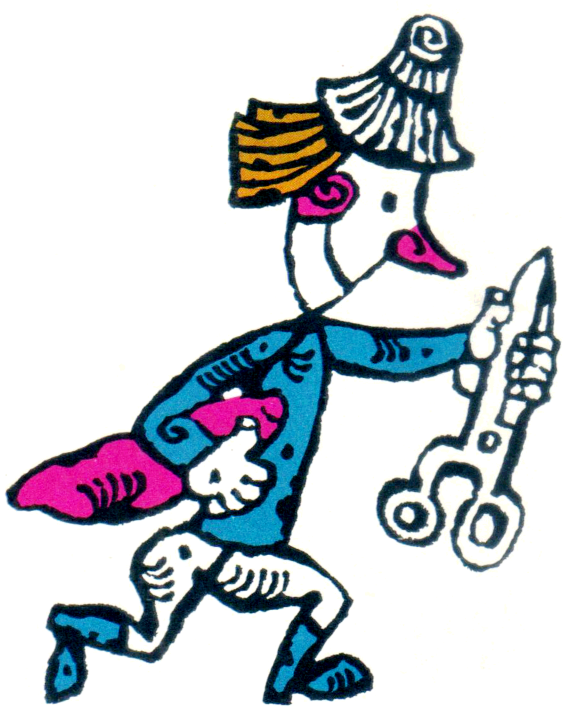
Their tail less,
Poor,
Fore-
Shortened
Brother.
Smarting sore
The lame wolf howls:
"Through our woods
The tailor prowls!
He'll flay you
Alive and he'll
Dock your tails—
Oo! Oo! Oo!
With great big scissors
As hot as nails!"
Well - the tailor
Was no easy
Catch!
So the wolves sat down



A plan to hatch
To hunt him down,
To beat him up,
To tear him to pieces,
And eat him up.

Then off they ran
On the tailor's track . . .
More and more wolves
Joined the pack.
It seemed unlikely
With such a rabble
That tailor or scissors
Would give them trouble.
The wolves were many,
The tailor small,
He'd soon be inside'em
Scissors and all.

But the tailor
Took to the trees.
Far out of reach,
He sat at his ease
In a lofty pine

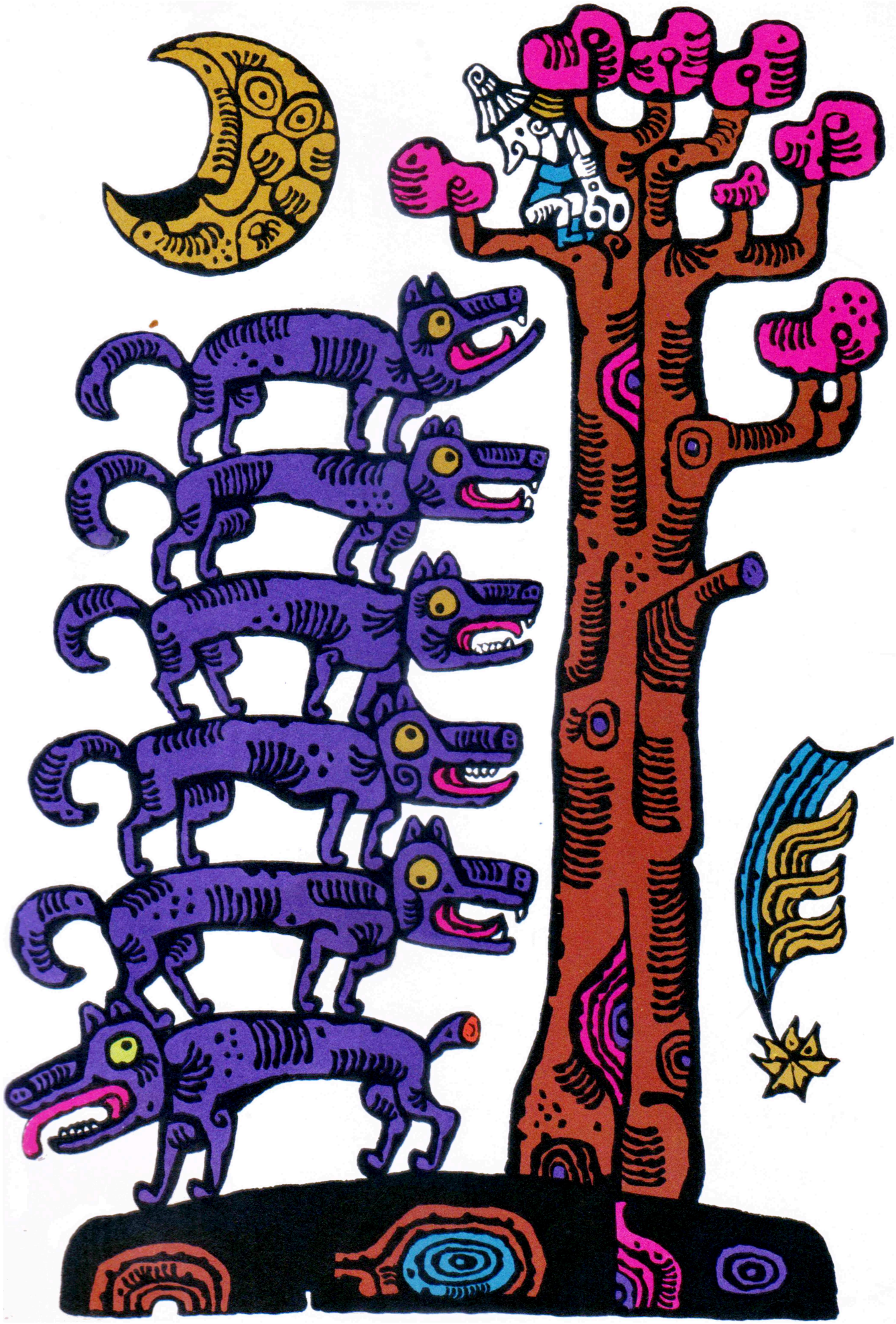


By firs applauded
And pretty little
Squirrels belauded.
The tailless wolf
With a great bound
Leaps at the tree
Then—round and round
Runs whimpering,
Staring at the tailor,
His stump tucked in
His jaws a-slaver.

Suddenly,
He forms a plan
Calls the pack up—
Quick as they can.
He snarls at them
To get in line,
Then rears his paws
Against the pine.

On his shoulder,
One after another,
Spring his furious,
Shaggy brothers.
See! A living
Pyramid grows . . .
And now they snap
At the tailor's toes.

The tailor, however,
Still has his tongue:
"Not enough for you all
Too much for one . . .
Ah well, carve me up
As you think fit.



But as to that stump-tailed,
Foreshortened twit—
I'll trim his claws for him."
Hearing that,
Old stump-tail ran
Like a scalded cat.
And—bang-crash-bang!—
All the wolves
Fell down in a flummox.
One lay spread-eagled
Out on his stomach,
Another—paws up—
To the moon did point,
While a third had his nose
Put all out of joint.
Whining and howling,
Snarling and growling,
The hurt wolves closed
In a worrying smother

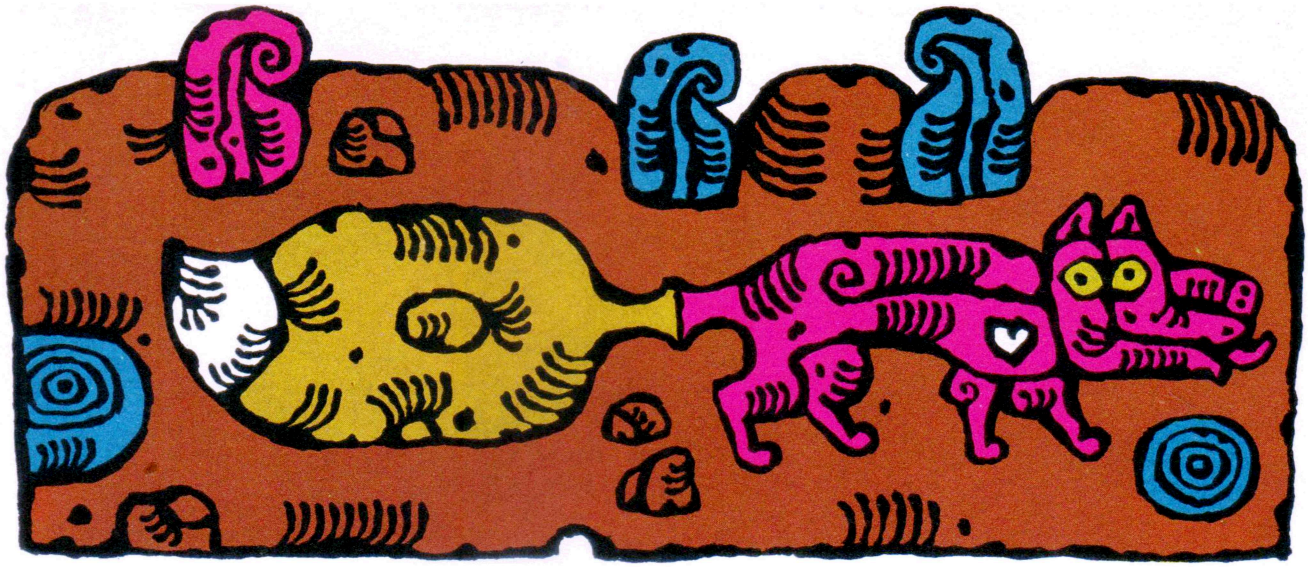
To take it out of
Their tailless brother,
Who fled away
With the whole pack after.

The little squirrels
Shook with laughter
Waved their tails,
Clapped their paws,
And gave them a rousing
Round of applause.

As for the tailor,
Quite cool and calm
He went off home
And under his arm
Long as a lash,
Thick as a bush,
He carried the brush
Of the tailless wolf.

Stumpy-tail sat
Down and thought.
How to come by a tail
Begged, borrowed or bought.
The magpies, he felt,
Would be sure to giggle:
"What do you do with
No tail to wiggle?"

And worse—the owl,
Being of learned habit,
Would want to know if
He were bear—or rabbit?
"Intolerable!
An unheard of thing!
I'll go and complain—now—
To the King!"



The Lion, the King of Beasts,
Was easy-going
And helped the wolf himself
To do the sewing.
But—being in something of a rush—
Stitched on a silver-fox's brush.

The wolf, scarce daring
To move around,

Trailed his new tail proudly
Sweeping the ground.
But soon the tail was
Thistly and burry—
The old lame wolf
Can't lift his furry,
Silvery, fluffy,
Luxuriant tail,
But drags it behind him
Along the trail.
Foxes are swanks,
He thought contritely,
Then met a hedgehog
And asked him politely,
Saying "please",
To act as a brush
To get the thistles
Out of his brush.
Hedgehog set
To work with a will,
Brushing the lame wolf's
Tail until . . .
There was no hair left!
Old wolf let out
A fearful howl,

Then berated his friend
In a gruesome growl:

"See, hedge-pig, see
What you have done!
Combed out the fluff!
They'll all make fun
Of me again . . .
The fox, the bear:
'Is that a parsnip
You've got there?
It's not what you
Could call a tail.'"
The hedgehog answered,
Turning pale:
"Great Wolf, oh, please,
Don't be so cross!
We'll very soon
Make good the loss!
With resin-glue
We'll stick the hair
Back on again
Where now you're bare!
We'll have you looking
Quite entrancing,
Just run to where
The pines are dancing
All green and sappy,
And fetch me here
Their resin-tar."
While he was looking,
Near and far,
For resin, all
The fluff was carried
Off by magpies
And well-buried
Beneath the bracken
And the bushes,
Hedgehog had hidden
Himself and his brushes.
Maybe he's there until this day,
I never saw him slip away.

Stump-tail came back
With the resin,
Saw the magpies
At their nesting,
Lining nests with
His good fluff
And—as though that
Were not enough—
Laughing fit
To bust!
Stump-tail was angry
At this sight,
"Just wait, you piebald
Parasites!
I'll tear your tails off—
Black and white."

And as he said
So did he do.
And ever since
He hunts them through
The sapling pines
And knows no rest,
Because his tail still
Lines their nests.

THE TORTOISE GIVES GOOD ADVICE

What a business!
What a tale!
When the tortoise
Met the snail!

How proudly the snail
To the tortoise did say:
"I have finished building
My house today
By the shore of the sea,
And now I'm forming
A plan for a party,
A nice house-warming."

Off went the snail
Along the path
To gather friends
About her hearth.
Proud to have
A house of her own,
She invited everyone
To come.
But . . . what sad news
Is this we hear?
Her home's been trampled
By a bear.
Sadly the snail
Goes winding home
To find the guests
Already come.
And no house left,
No house at all,
Except for the roof—
One shell so small.

The centipede
And green grasshopper
Sympathised
As each thought proper.
The cat-fish's long
Moustaches quivered,
Quaking jelly-fish
Feelingly shivered.
And many well-meant
Words were said
Before the guests went
Off to bed.

Only the tortoise,
Who turned up late,
Told the snail
And told her straight:
"If you will go gadding
Off like that,
Pack your house
Along on your back.
I take my fortress
Wherever I go
And know no care
Though it's somewhat slow.

And I keep repeating
As I grow older
Come death, come disaster,
The good householder
Be he crab, or snail, or tortoise
Should never
Never
Leave his fortress."

The poor snail pulled
Herself together:
"Good advice is

Welcome ever . . ."
And, heeding well
Her old friend's rede,
Began again
With skill and speed
To build a house
By the shore of the sea . . .
And ever as she worked,
Sang she!
"Come death, come disaster
Snail and tortoise
Must never
Never
Leave their fortress."
Once again
She takes the road.
On her back
A heavy load:
The house forth with
Its mistress fares—
To the great delight
Of the baby hares,
Who somersault
And crowd around,
Laughing so hard
They roll on the ground:

"Ha-ha-ha!
Here's a fine to do!
What naughty joker's
Been teaching you
Those words of wisdom,
You have taught us;
To never
Never
Leave your fortress?"
"No naughty joker,
No idle starer,
But the tortoise,

The great home-bearer,
Has given us
This wondrous rede—
Which you, foolish folk,
Would do well to heed."
But the little hares
Were in such a fit
Of giggles that all
Their lips were split.

Children, why—do you think?—
Should hare or bunny
Find the snail
So excessively funny?

GRANDFATHER'S STORIES

Old People
Tell stories
For girls
And for boys
So that Maries
and Johnies
May grow
Kind
And handsome
And tall
On the Amber-Coast.

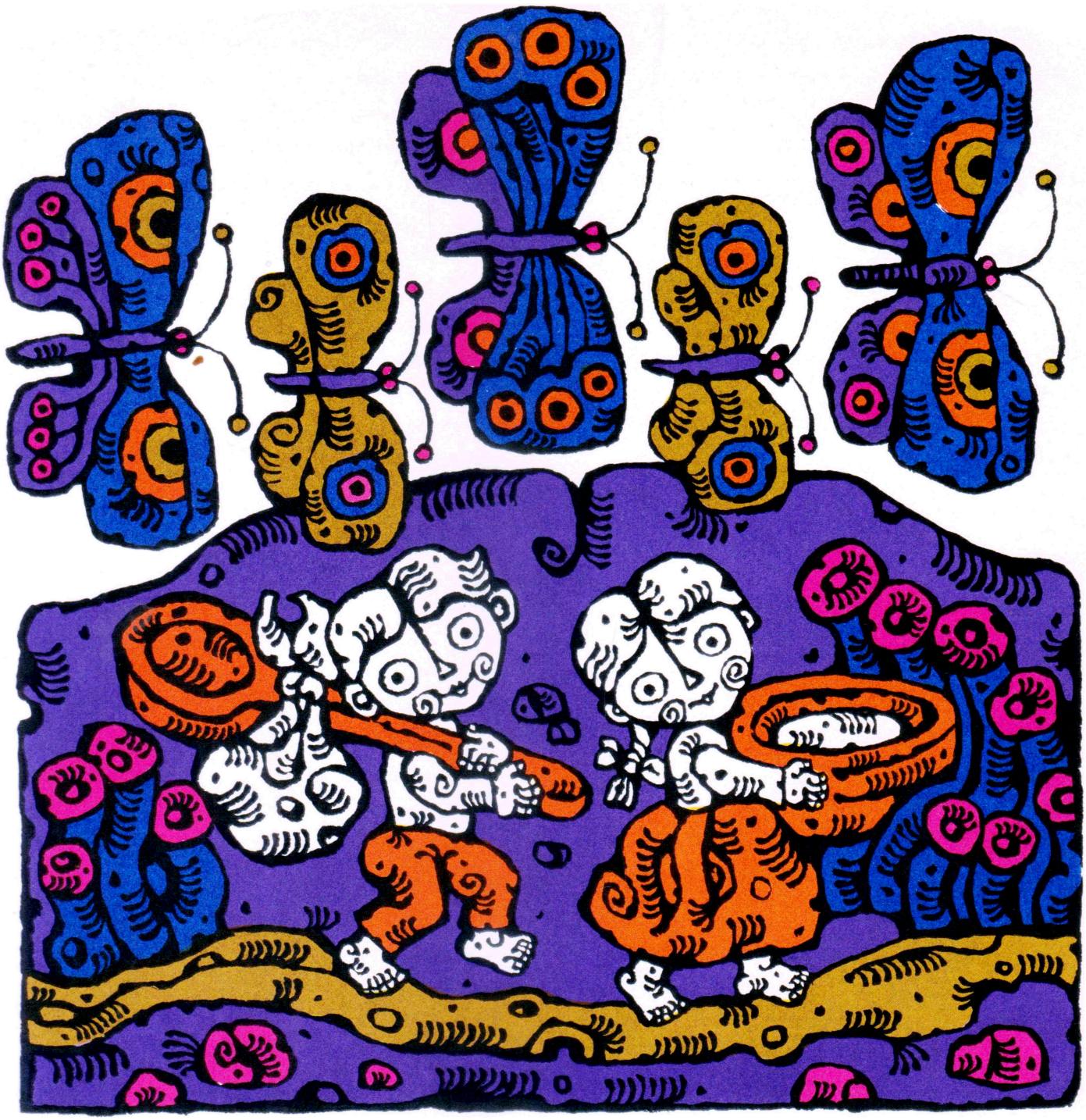
MASTER PEA AND MISS BEAN

Once upon a time and maybe still
There lived an old couple under
a hill.
Pure pea's pudding
The old man ground,
Pounding and thudding
Around and around,
Till hand was stiff and arm was sore:
"Alas," said he, "I can grind no more,
If only the stork
Would bring me a son
To help with the work,
It would soon be done.
Then out upon the grassy hill
He'd drive the calves to graze
their fill.

Welcome he'd be,
The little lad,
Cared for by me
Like a pea in the pod.
Safe and sound with me he'd be,
And that's what I'd call him:
Master Pea."

Sitting beside him,
Shelling beans,
His goodwife chimed in
To tell her dreams.
"Better the stork should bring me a
daughter
To comb my hair and to fetch fresh
water.
Welcome she'd be,
The little lass,
Cared for by me
Like a bean under glass.
I'd have treated her like a queen,
And I'd have called her: Little Bean."
The old folks had no more to say,
But a pea and a bean were chatting away
One to another:
"Bean," said the pea,
"Old grandfather
Is tired, I see.
So what if I
To be his son,
Should have a try?
His errands run,

And out upon the grassy hill
His bullocks drive to graze their fill?"
And as the sieve went round and around,
A dry, white pea bounced down to the ground.
The bean came after all in a whirl,
"As for me: I shall be a girl!
Help our granny
Sweep the floor,
Dust each cranny,
Oil the door.
Every day her hens I'll feed
And take the goats out on a lead."
And as the sieve went round and round,
A shining bean bounced down to the ground.
Like sister and brother
Hand in hand
By grandfather and mother
They took their stand.
"Here, Grandfather, look, it's me!
The boy you were wishing for—Master Pea."
"Here, Grandmother, I've come to you,
Little Bean—and your daughter true."
What a delight
For the ancient pair,
They hugged them tight,
Then up in the air
They threw them high,
And caught them after,
Ready to cry
Yet full of laughter . . .
Two old folks, bubbling with joy.
Two young folks babbling—girl and boy.
Babbling, bubbling,
Never troubling . . .
All that day
They spent in play,
Till the stars began to peep
And Pea and Bean fell fast asleep.
Morning mist—and
The rising sun
Has come and kissed
Them everyone:
"Helpers small,
Sleeping sound,
Wake up all
And look around!
Get up, children!" The children stir
As the bright beams tickle cheeks and hair.
Pea's out of bed
Up and away
Into the calf-shed
With the hay.
Little Bean too
Is up and about
The goat is seen to,
The cat let out.
The firewood's brought,
As quick as thought,
The kettle sizzles,
The frying-pan frizzles.
Old grandmother cannot believe her eyes.
Breakfast is ready—such a surprise!
Her little bean-daughter
Has set dough to rise,
Brought in clean water,
And baked them all pies.
Little Mistress Bean, the sweetest ever seen,
You'll not find such another, wherever you have been!
As for grandfather, he says to grandmother:
"My dear, you will never find such another



As our Master Pea!
He's as good as a man!
It's a great joy to me
To have such a son.
The bullocks are fed,
The calves are watered,
He's an old man's head
On his strong young shoulders."
And gran'dad showed the Pea-boy how
To harness oxen to the plough,
Then off he went
To plough the field,

Till day, far spent,
To night must yield.
"When your shadow's right under your feet,
Then bring me along a bite to eat."
So said he
To old grandmother,
To Bean and to Pea—
Gay sister and brother.
"Who will take bread
And cheese?"
"I will," Little Pea said,
"Please."
"Who will take him
His bowl of cream?"

"I will," spoke up
Little Bean.
"You may both go, dears! All right!
But see you do not quarrel or fight."
Off they skip through the stubble,
Making light of all the trouble,
Though the stubble is dense and strong
And they would lose themselves there long,
Were it night,
But now it's light.
So on they stray
With cheese and cream
Down a winding way
That leads to a stream,
A stream too deep for them to ford . . .
So they take a bowl without wasted word,
And brave the waves:
Master Pea, with a ladle,
Rows them as fast
As he's able
And Little Bean
Has a wooden spoon.
Soon the river
Is safely past,
Brother and sister
Press on at last
To bring the weary old man his snack.
He knocks off work and knocks then back,
The cup of cream and the bread and cheese.
But Little Master Pea says: "Please,
Please, Gran'dad—Would
You let me plough?
I'm sure I could,
If you showed me how."
And Little Bean, with a hop and a skip,

Says: "I'll follow on and crack the whip!"
And gran'dad humours their whim most kindly,
"You may plough as long as you have a mind to."

Straight as an arrow
Master Pea
Drives his furrow.
Little Miss Bean,
Quite undismayed,
Is riding one
Great ox astride,
Holding his horn,
Enjoying the ride,
Urging him on.

While the old man has a nice sit-down
They have the whole field ploughed and sown.
Then, of course,
The landlord appeared.
Checking his horse,
He sat and stared.
"What in thunder?"
The landlord said,
"Wonder of wonders!
I never did!
Bullocks ploughing
The field alone!
Hey, you there, now,
Come here, bow down!
Whose is that plough,
That ploughs alone?"

The landlord sits
His horse like a throne.
It champs the bit
As he glowers down
With eyes so harsh
And smooths his whiskers,
And twirls his moustache
With soft, white fingers.
"Master—don't waste time on the likes
of me
It's only Miss Bean and Wee Master
Pea."

"Why can I not see them, then?
Look sharp, old man, and call them in."
"Come, my children, come quick to me,
The Master's calling you, Bean and
Pea . . ."

Bumpity—bumping
Over the furrows
Pea comes running
And Little Bean follows.
"There now, Master,
You'd never know them—
Small Miss and Master—
For such good ploughmen."

"Ho-ho-ho! Ploughmen indeed!
I'll have'em in kennels to walk on a lead.
Ho-ho-ho! Just the pets for my wife,
I've seen nothing so neat in the whole of my life.
Tell you what, old man, take a hundred pennies!"
But the old man said:
"I don't want any."
"You mean to say,
They are not for sale?
Another day
You'll not do so well!
I'll take them for nothing, your son and daughter,
Your oxen shall both be sold for slaughter!
When I have the roof down over your head,
You'll wish you'd taken the cash instead."
The poor old man
Burst into tears.
Pea and Bean
Tried to calm his fears:
"Good Master, sitting so high in your saddle
Far be it from you to steal babes from the cradle!"
But Little Miss Bean and Master Pea
Were not so easily cowed, you'll see.
"Cheer up, Gran' dad, give us away
We'll be home again in a trice," they say.
But the poor old man
He wept and he wept,
Till his tiny son
On the huge horse leapt
With a hop and a skip, right into his ear:
"No, Master—you can't do that there 'ere."
Little Bean saw Wee Pea disappear
And went bouncing into the other ear.
"Hey, horse, mind!"
Whispered Little Pea.
"Go like the wind
Over hill and lea,
Shake the landlord
From side to side,
Scatter his old bones
Far and wide!"
The bay horse needed no second bidding.
He reared up high then, sliding and skidding,
Plunged away like a steer on the gad
Over good land and over bad.
The landlord clung to his mane, eyes popping,
But the great bay horse showed no sign of stopping.
On he galloped, faster and faster,
Till he'd shaken off his tyrannous master
And over hill and river-side
Had scattered his old bones far and wide.
Out from his ears the children popped
And back to the dear old man they hopped.
After which Little Bean and Wee Master Pea
Asked the village children home to tea.
Rumour has it they've now grown up
And live quite near,
And are glad of guests
For a bite of sup!
What's that—where?
How to get there from here?
I've quite forgotten.

GREEDY-GUTS

Once there lived a greedy girl,
An envious and grasping girl,
When she went out
She'd always shout:
"Gimmee! That's mine! Gimmee!"
Her father brought an apple home,
A red and rosy apple home!
"Half for Daddy, half for you!"
"I want it all!" She shrieked and
threw
The other half at me.
When her mother brought a pear,
Again I offered her a share.
"No!" she brushed the half aside,
"I want it all!" she shrieked and
cried,
"Gimmee, it's mine, gimmee!"
Ah, she was such a greedy girl,
A greedy-guts, a grasping girl!
But listen well,
And I shall tell,
How cured she came to be!

Greedy-guts, day after day,
Heard how the brave sun sends his rays
To warm all boys and girls alike,
A thought she took in strong dislike.
Grasping girl, she wanted the sun
Hung in her room for herself alone.

Once, at sunset, she went out to play
And saw the red sun rolling away,
As it seemed to her—along the ground
Like a great big apple, red and round.
She left her friends and started to run
Over the fields—after the sun.
She thought she would catch him and
make him swear
Not to sail any more through the upper
air,
Warming all the other kids—but
To shine for no one but Greedy-guts,
Swung from her ceiling high and white.
So Greedy-guts ran into the night,
Deeper and deeper into the wood,

While the old sun sank, just as quick
as he could.
Blind with envy, the silly child
Went astray in the forest wild.
Poor little Greedy-guts!
Lost her way
In the dark, quiet woods
At close of day.

All night long she shivered and shook,
All night long these words she spoke:
"If only I live till the sun appears,
I'll never envy apples or pears,
I'll never be greedy about the sun,
I'll never be nasty to anyone."

The sun came out to light her way,
Home through the wood, at break of
day,
Greedy-guts came,
Covered in shame.
Never will she be greedy again
Or envy others—
For that, my daughter,
Is something darkness
And silence taught her.

THE HEMPEN CALF

His name was
Old Beaver.
He lived on
The wold.
His wife was
Called Turnip.
She kept him
From cold,
She stoked up
His stove and
She cooked him
His meals,
While Beaver
Sowed hemp in
His garden
And fields.

Then Turnip
Came after
To weed and
To tend
The sprouting,
The tasseled,
The delicate
Hemp.

Soon Autumn
Approached like
A thief in
The night,
Set thistle-
Down floating
In soft clouds
Of white.
While trudging
To look for
Dry wood for
To kindle
Her fire in
The winter,
Poor Turnip
Saw brindle-
Grey calves on
The stubble,
Went back to
Her husband
And told him
Her trouble:
"Old man, though
Of beard and
Of whiskers

You've plenty,
Our friends all
Have calves while
Our cow-shed
Stands empty."

Old Beaver
Was sorry
To see her
Distraught,
Went into
The garden
And, quick as
Thought,
Came back with
A twist of
Bedraggled
Hemp:
"See here is
A calf for us—
All unkempt,
With horns like
A bodkin
And hairs sharp
As thistles,
As grey and
As fat as
The landlords'
Brindles."
He tarred the
Hemp-twist and
Four fine legs
He carved from
Some sturdy
Old maple-
Wood pegs,
Then tied the
New calf to
A stake in
The meadow.

His wife dried
Her tears and
Said: "Clever
Old Fellow!"

The brindle-
Grey calf, by
The edge of
The bushes,
Was eating
The grass, when
Out there rushes
A bear from
The wood and,
Seeing him,
Said:
"Ho, brindle-
Grey calf! I
Will have your
Head
And hang up
Your hide on
The top of
That tree."
Said little
Grey calf: "Ah,
Please, listen
To me!
I'll sing you
A song that
You'll love
To hear.
Listen
Oh listen!
Sweet-tooth
Bear:
'I'm a poor little calfling,
A hempen-twist halfling;
My legs are of maple-
Wood carved in the stable,

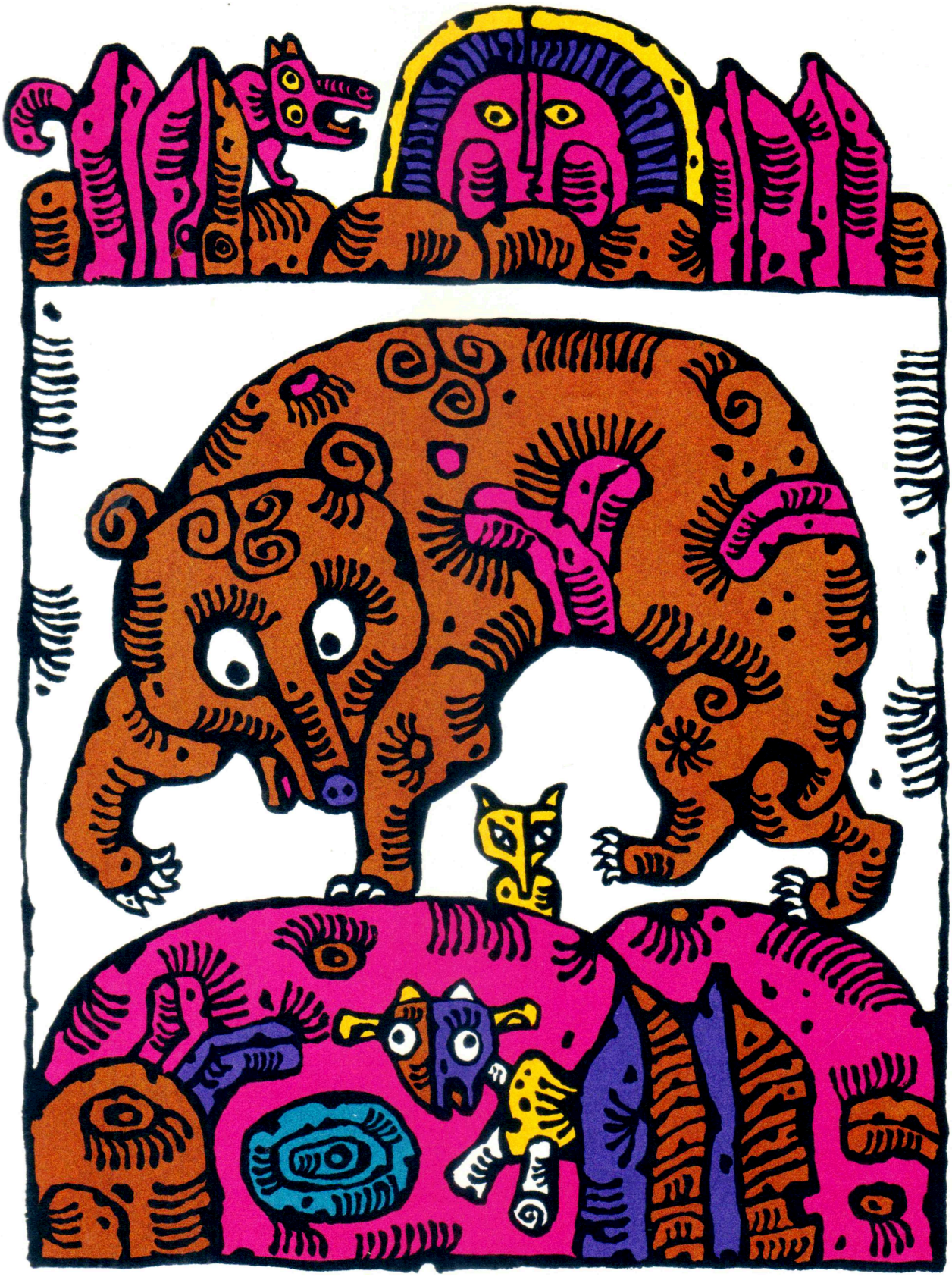
My coat is all prickly,
I'm tarred and I'm sticky,
My horns are like needles,
I'm all made of twine.
But unless thou canst leap me—
I'll never be thine!'"

Sweet-tooth then—
Hur-rump! Burrump!—
Gave a
Truly
Tremendous
Jump . . .
And stuck.
Boo-hoo-hoo!
He don't
Know what to
Do!
So in goes
His paw and
Suck-suck-suck!
Boohooing
Won't help you
To free your
Paw.
It's stuck to
The tar and—
What's this now?
Not more!

A ravening
She-wolf
Springs out from
The teazles:
"Ho, brindle-
Grey calf! I
Will have your
Head
And stretch out
Your hide to
Be tanned on
Those hazels."
Said little
Grey calf: "Pray,
Before I'm dead
I've got a
Sweet song that
Is just for
You.
Listen,
Ah listen,
Grey Wolf,
Do!
'I'm a poor little calfling,
A hempen-twist halfling,
My legs are of maple-
Wood carved in the stable
My coat is all prickly,
I'm tarred and I'm sticky,
My horns are like needles,
I'm all made of twine—
But unless thou canst leap me
I'll never be thine!'"
Grey Wolf then,
With a howl and a thump

Gave a
Truly
Tremendous
Jump . . .
And stuck.
Whoo-hoo-hoo!
She can't think
What to do
To rub off
The tar from
Her jaws
Or to free
Her paws
Of the horrible
Muck.

The brindle-grey calf
Was nibbling his grass
When out of nowhere
A vixen
Stole!
"Ho, brindle-
Grey calf! I
Will have your
Head
And take your
Soft skin for
To carpet
My hole."
Said little grey calf
Still nibbling his grass:
"Please, listen to
me!
Before I'm
Dead
I'll sing you
A song, you
Will never
Forget!
Oh, Chewer
Of Chickens!
My merriest
yet!
'I'm a poor little calfling,
A hempen-twist halfling,
My legs are of maple-
Wood carved in the stable,
My coat is all prickly,
I'm tarred and I'm sticky,
My horns are like needles,
I'm all made of twine—
But unless thou canst leap me
I'll never be thine!'"
Red fox
Cocked
Her ears



To hear
Him sing,
Then gave a
Delicate,
Pouncing
Spring!
"Wow-wow-wow!
My claws are
Stuck!"
Come-come, now!
However
You whine or
You bark,
The dog-fox
Won't come till
The fields are
Dark.
And even so
Things being
As they are,
He'll not dare
To pull you
Out of that tar!

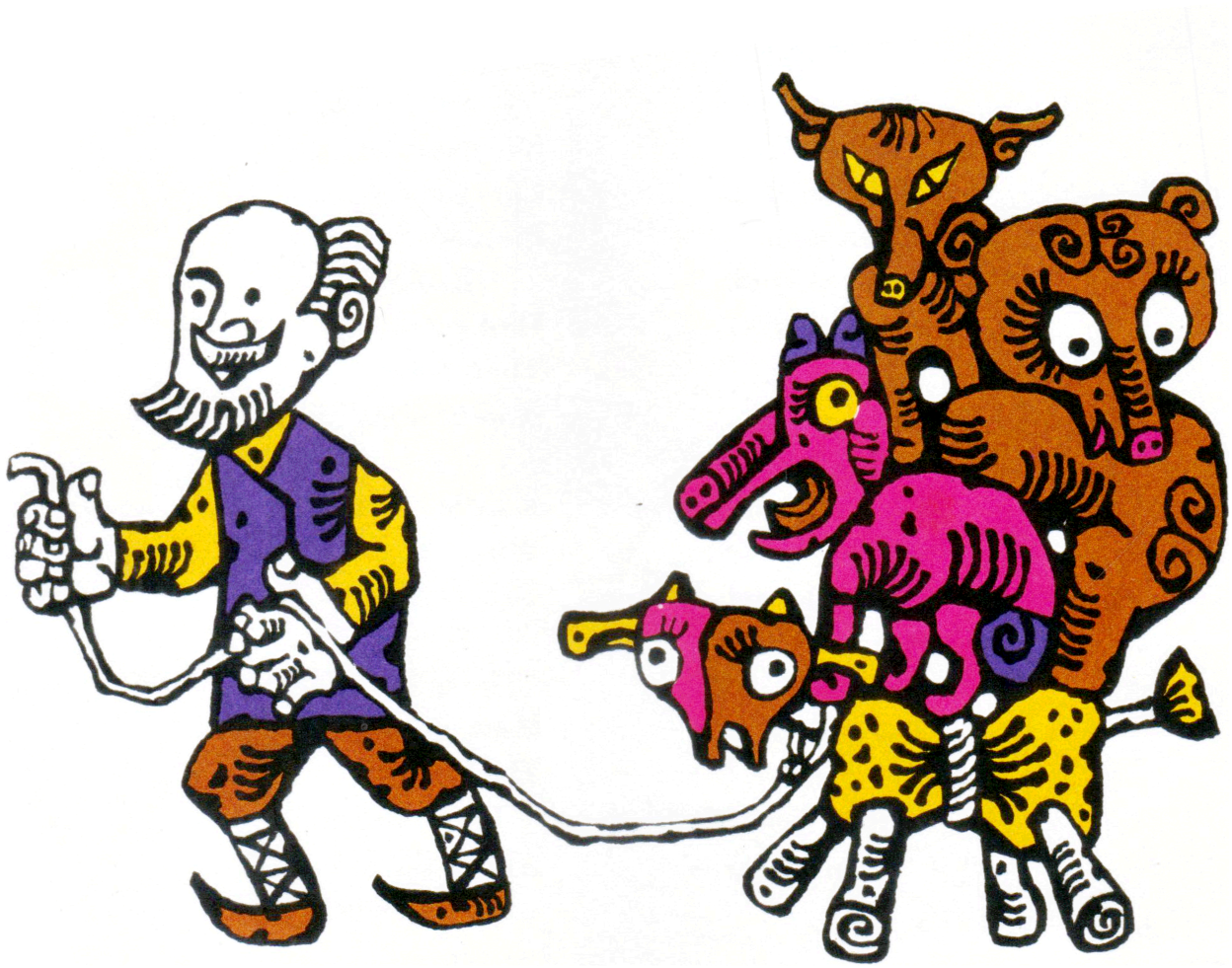
*

The old man
Called Beaver
He came for
The calf.
"Well *what* a
Good catch!" He
Could not but
Laugh . . .
He led the
Grey-brindle
Back home from
His grazing.
His Turnip
Just flung up
Her hands in
Amazement:
"Old Sweet-tooth
The Bear, and
The She-wolf
Grim,
Our neighbour
The Vixen
Of silken
Skin . . .
Well, *what* a
Good catch!
Never seen such
A haul!
We'll be set
Up for life if
We skin them
All!"
"I'm thinking,
Dear Turnip,
We'll first skin
The bear
And make warm
Soft coats for
Our winter
Wear."
Poor Bruin
Took fright, "Boo-
Hoo-hoo! Oh,
Please!
Old man, let
Me lumber
Off into
The trees!
I'm only
A clumsy
Old flumsy,
Old Funny!
Don't kill me . . .
I'll bring you
A barrel
of
Honey."

So sorry
Was Beaver
For Cry-Baby-
Bear,
He turned to
His Turnip
And said: "My Dear!
Let's let him
Run free to
Where he
Belongs.
The wolf-hide's
Enough to
Make you a

Strong
And elegant
Jacket—
Not short and
Not long . . . ”
“Then sharpen
Your long knife
As sharp as
You can,
And I’ll go
And scrub out
The big tin
Pan . . . ”

Brrr!
The wolf was
Afraid for her
Life,
When she heard
Them talk of
Wash-pan and
Knife.
"Oh leave me
My hide to
Protect me
From cold!
And I'll be
Your goatherd
And guard
Your fold."
Although the
Poor lambs did
Not like the
Idea,
The old folks
Let the wolf go
After the bear.
"Come, Turnip,
The Vixen's
Soft, fluffy



Coat
Will make a
Fur collar
To warm your
Throat.
As soft as
Fine down and
All scented
With chicken!"
The Vixen
Implored them,
All pale and
Stricken:
"Good Lady!
Kind Turnip!
If you let
Me go
I'll bring you
A golden-
Red cock to
Crow
Aloft on
Your roof in
The morning!
A pea hen,
And pea cock
I also
Will bring
With a tail
Like a bride
Adorning!"
Although their
Old cocks did
Not like the
Idea,
They let the
Red Fox
Follow Grey Wolf
and Bear.

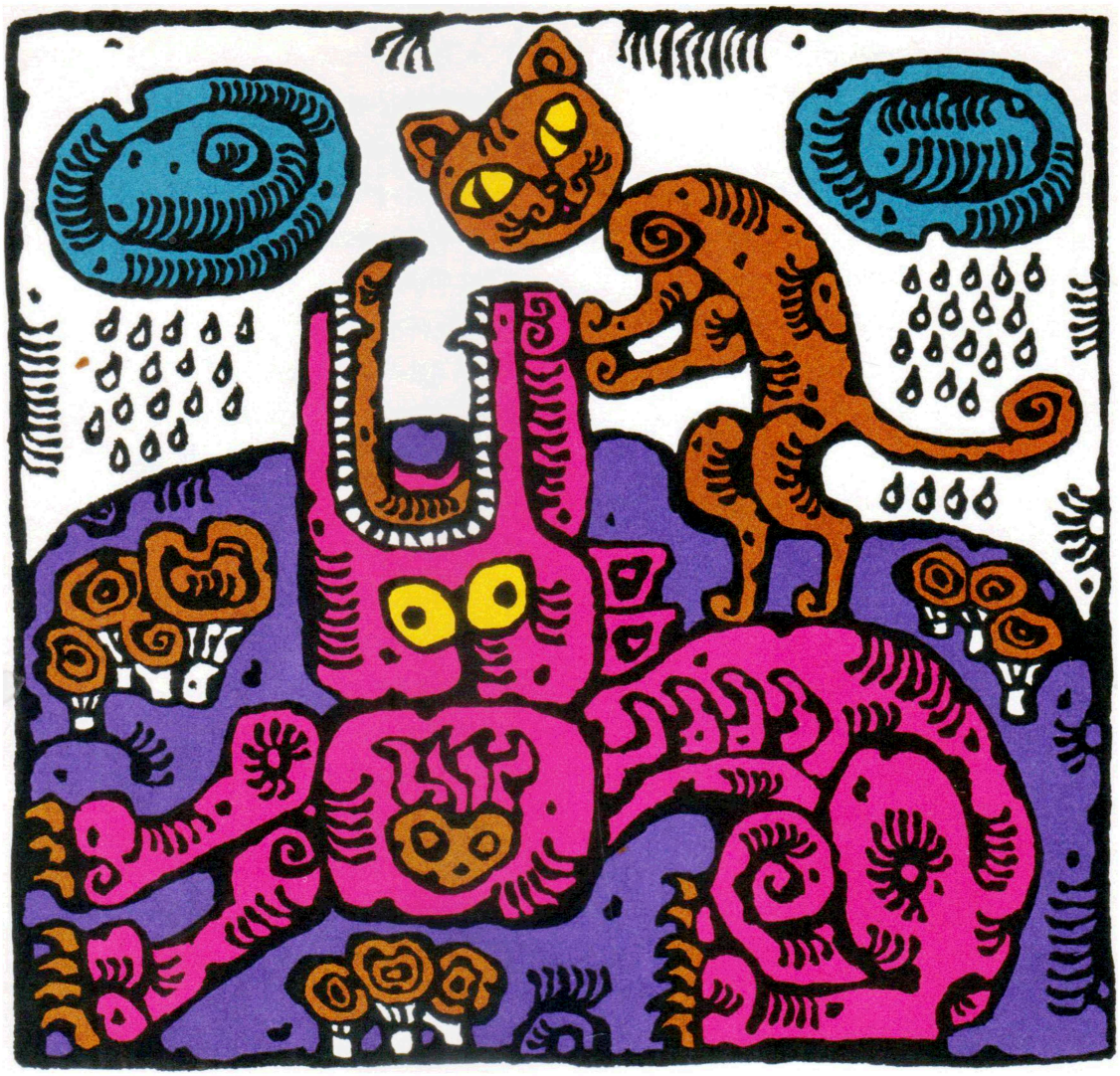
*

All winter
The old folks,
A-shiver
With cold,
Looked out to
The forest
Beyond the
Fold.
Nor Wolf,
Nor Bruin,
Nor Snipey Fox,
Nor lordly
Pea cock,
Nor common
Cocks,
Nor any
One else did
They ever see,
Until the
Spring sunshine
Brought them a
Bee.
She came to
Complain of
How big brown
Bruin
Had eaten
Their honey
And brought them
To ruin!
A little
White lamb at
The window
Peeped:
"The wild wolves
Have gotten
The half of
The sheep!"
And little
Grey hen who

Lived under
The bed
Said: "Chuck-chuck!
The Cock and
The Peacock are
Dead.
Both strangled
And mangled,
And ate by
The Vixen."
The brindle-
Grey calf was
So deeply
Stricken
By horror
And grief
He began to
Sicken . . .
The tar on
His pelt in
The sunshine
Was melting,

His prickles
Were scattered,
The hemp-twist
Grew tattered,
His legs—
Wooden pegs,
Began to bend off,
And that,
Alas,
Was quite the end of
The poor little calfling,
The hempen-twist halfling!

His master,
Old Beaver,
Now sits and
Smokes,
Pretending
T'was Turnip
Who fell for
The hoax.



HOW THE WOLF CHOKED ON AN EAR OF BARLEY

Come, and I'll tell you, children dear,
How Grey Wolf swallowed a barley ear—
Broad as any table-spoon,
Long as any river-reed—
Gulped and gulped, but could not gulp it
So firmly wedged it was in his gullet!

First he howled and then he hollered,
But the ear of barley would not be swallowed!
As he tried to fish it out with his paw,
Stepping daintily out of the mist, he saw,

A mouse in his jaws,
A cat—very scared.
"Pussy, oh Puss,"
Grey Wolf implores:
"Pray, tell me how
To swallow this ear!
My throat's so swollen
I would not dare
To sample so much as
a mouse."

Pussy Cat, feeling a deal more brave,
Sat down for a general cleaning-up.
After all, the danger was not so grave,
If the wolf was really not feeling up
To eating so much as a mouse that morning.

He looked at its throat and pronounced this warning:
"You'll not get it down, nor dissolved, nor shaken out
It will have to be professionally taken out!"
"Well, take it out, please," Grey Wolf implores.
"For that I'd need a curving bill,
I couldn't do it with my paws,
Though I would try with a good will:
The barley bristles
Have gone in deep."
The poor wolf croaks:
"Who has such a beak?"
"The crane, of course," replied the cat.
The sick beast's eyes lit up at that:
"Where is she, then, and what's she doing?"
"Down in the marshes—fishing."
"Good, good, Tom Cat, just lead me to her
Or else you will be wishing

Yourself elsewhere.
I cannot bite
Or use my jaws,
But I have claws
—See here! See here!—

And I can tear
You and your mouse to pieces!"
Tom Cat's hair was all on end,
"Who would have thought that the
wolf so harsh is!"
He thought, and led his unwanted friend
With all dispatch to the great, green
marshes.

The crane, as always, was busily
bog-hunting,
Cracking snail shells, frugally
frog hunting,
Seeking for slugs
And burrowing bugs . . .
But seeing Grey Wolf and Tom Cat
approaching,
She took to her wings and abandoned
her poaching.
For the crane
Escape
Is surer and shorter
Up in the air
Or into the water.
But Grey Wolf groaned and moaned in
his pain:
"Crane, long-legged, beautiful
crane!
I have heard," the wolf whined
piteously,
"That your beak is curved and
extremely long.
Take out the barley-ear, pray you,
pity me!
For though normally I am supreme-
ly strong,
I can no longer snap, nor swallow,
Nor howl the silent woods to
rouse . . .
Help me, sweet bird, there'll be
frogs to follow
And Pussy Cat here has brought you
his mouse.
Come now, kind crane,
Pick out this ear!
My throat's so swollen
I would not dare
To sample so much as
A frog."
The crane then, feeling a deal
more brave,
Came close and performed the operation.
But the danger at once grew exceedingly
grave

For wolves have *no* sense of obligation!
And though he had been unable to swallow,
He could now manage frog—with crane to follow:

"I've had nothing to eat
For an hour or two.
I could do with a bite
And—I'll start on you."
"Well, of all the ungracious
Ravening, rapacious,
Ungrateful, mannerless,
Gluttonous animals!"

But already the wolf had the crane in his clutches.
With a whir and a swirl she dived into the water
Close behind her, straight into the marshes,
The wolf went charging and would have caught her,
If he hadn't first hooked a log with his claw
And driven a splinter deep into his paw.

Pussy Cat made straight for the trees,
Skimmed up a fir as high as he dared,
And sat there spitting—mortally scared—
With the mouse still dangling between his teeth.
But what is this?
Whining and whimpering,
Back to poor Puss
Grey Wolf comes scampering,
Sits himself down at the foot of the tree,
Holds up his paw for Puss to see,
And begs him to put it to rights again—
This time, though, Grey Wolf, you will beg in vain.

He yowls and
He howls, but
Green-eyes
Just growls:
"Whether you yell
Or whether you don't,
I can tell you now
That I jolly well won't
Come pull out that splinter,
Though you sit there all winter!"

The ravening old plunderer
Roared like a thunderclap:

"This stout fir
I'll soon lay flat.
I'll soon bestir
That filthy cat!
I'll force that Tom to take out my splinter,
If I have to gnaw at the trunk all winter."

Not all winter, but all day long
He gnawed at the tree-trunk, gnarled and strong.
The old tree swayed—this way—and that—
Then toppled
And squashed
The great wolf flat . . .
As for the cat,
Green-eyed, grey-mittened,
He fled off home
Like a streak to his kittens

To tell the tale to his chidren dear
Of how Grey-Wolf swallowed a barley-ear!

TRIVAINELIS THE SHEPHERD-BOY

Little shepherd
Trivainelis,
Rising early
In the morn,
Blew his flute,
Put on his sheepskin,
Stepped into the
Dew of dawn.
Cold the grey grass,
White the lambkins,
Tasty is his
Bread and cheese.
Trivainelis
Twangs his bow-string,
Spies a wolf
Amongst the trees:
"Trivainelis,
Little brother,
Just one lamb
I beg of you . . . "
Trivainelis
Has him covered
Springs between him
And his ewes:
"Hey, Grey Wolf,
Bring me a handful
Of the ripest
Hazel nuts.
I'll pick you out
A tender lambkin . . . "

Grey Wolf
Sees the bow—
And cuts.
There's no arguing
With arrows!
There's no arguing
With a bow!
Grudgingly the
Old wolf slinks
To where the hazel
Thickets grow.

Jingle-jangle
Out of reach,
The hazel-clusters
Hang and dangle.
Vainly Grey Wolf
Leaps and jumps,

Then tumbles backward
With a bump.
"Oo-oo! Oy-Oy!"
Grey Wolf mutters,
Vengeful, angry,
"Better far to
Steal a lambkin.
I'll outwit
That shepherd-boy."

*

Trivainelis
On the pastures
Guards his ewe lambs,
When a new lamb
Dancing, prancing,
Weeping sorely
Leaves the flock to
Seek his side,
"Baa-baa-baa!
You'd not give poor me
To the wolf
To be destroyed?!
I'm afrai-aid!"
Trivainelis
Tries to cheer him:
"Oh, you silly,
Little billy!
Sure, you've no
Need to fear him,
Toothless tyrant
That he is!
He will never,
Never ever,
Pick me nuts—No,
Not one handful!
Neither is he
Very clever!
He'll not fool me,
Trivainelis!
Never will he
Get a lambkin!"
"Grand!" the lambkin
Pranced with joy,
"How kind you are,
Dear shepherd-boy!"
And completely
Comforted
Back to the white
Flock he sped!

*

Trivainelis
On his sheep
All alone
His watch must keep.
Long the watch
And long the day!
How to pass
The time away,

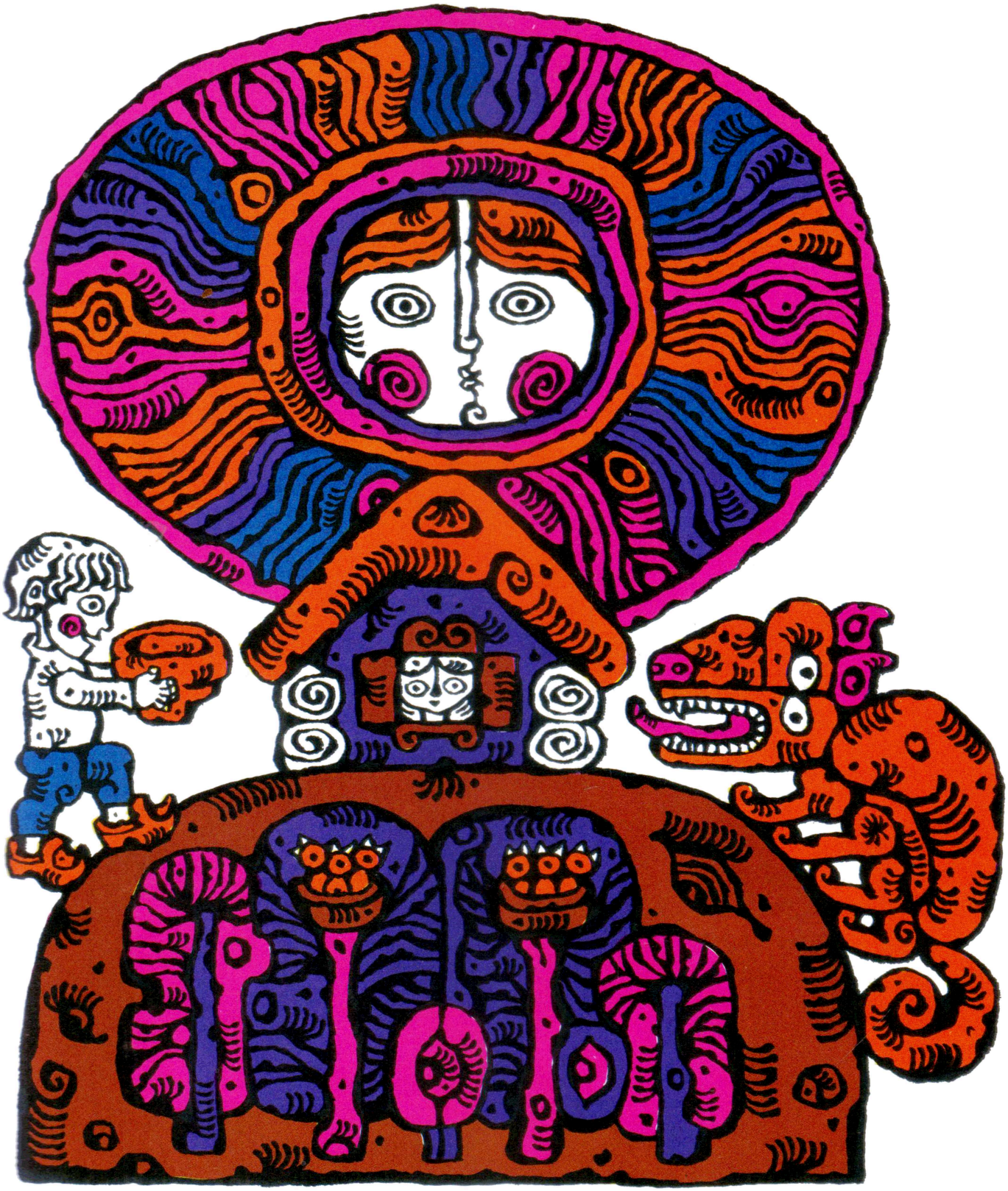
All by himself
He cannot think . . .
In the warm bank,
On the brink
Of the forest
There are wild red
Strawberries growing.
One red berry
Brightly glowing,
Trivainelis
Picks, and over
Shoulder throwing,
Spins around,
And sees there standing,
On the ground,
A little maiden.
"Little maiden,
Sweet Wild Strawberry,
Please, will you help me
Pasture my sheep?

I'll make you a
Flute and I'll build
You a cottage,
So that you, like a
Queen, from the windows
May peep!"
Trivainelis
Chopped a tree down,
Sawed the logs up,
Built a cottage.
"Here's your home
My tiny lady!
Evening falls
Upon the lea!
Lulla-by-by!
Slumber sound.
With my sheep
I'm homeward bound.
Tomorrow, if
You wait for me,
I'll bring you a sieve,
A sieve of beans,
And a new-baked
Cheese-cake!"

Little shepherd
Trivainelis
Rose right early
In the dawning,
Drove his sheep
Back to the cottage,
Called his friend
To meet the morning:
"Little girl,
Little Wild
Strawberry,
Open the door
And come out to me!
I've brought you a sieve,
A sieve of beans
And a new-baked
Cheese-cake!"
Wicked old wolf
Still as a mouse
Was crouched down
Listening behind
The house!

"Little shepherd
Trivainelis,
I'll outwit
The Strawberry girl
And steal her away
When the darkness falls."

Now already
Night was falling.
Trivainelis,
Homeward calling



His white lambs, had
Said good-night.
The door was slammed and
Bolted tight.
Grr, grurrurrr!
Grey Wolf stole out,
Opened his jaws
To breaking point,
And started to shout
In a raucous
Bass:
"Little maid,
Don't hesitate!
Lift the latch
Or you'll be too late!
I've brought you a fatling
Calf and piglet
Crunchy with crackling!"

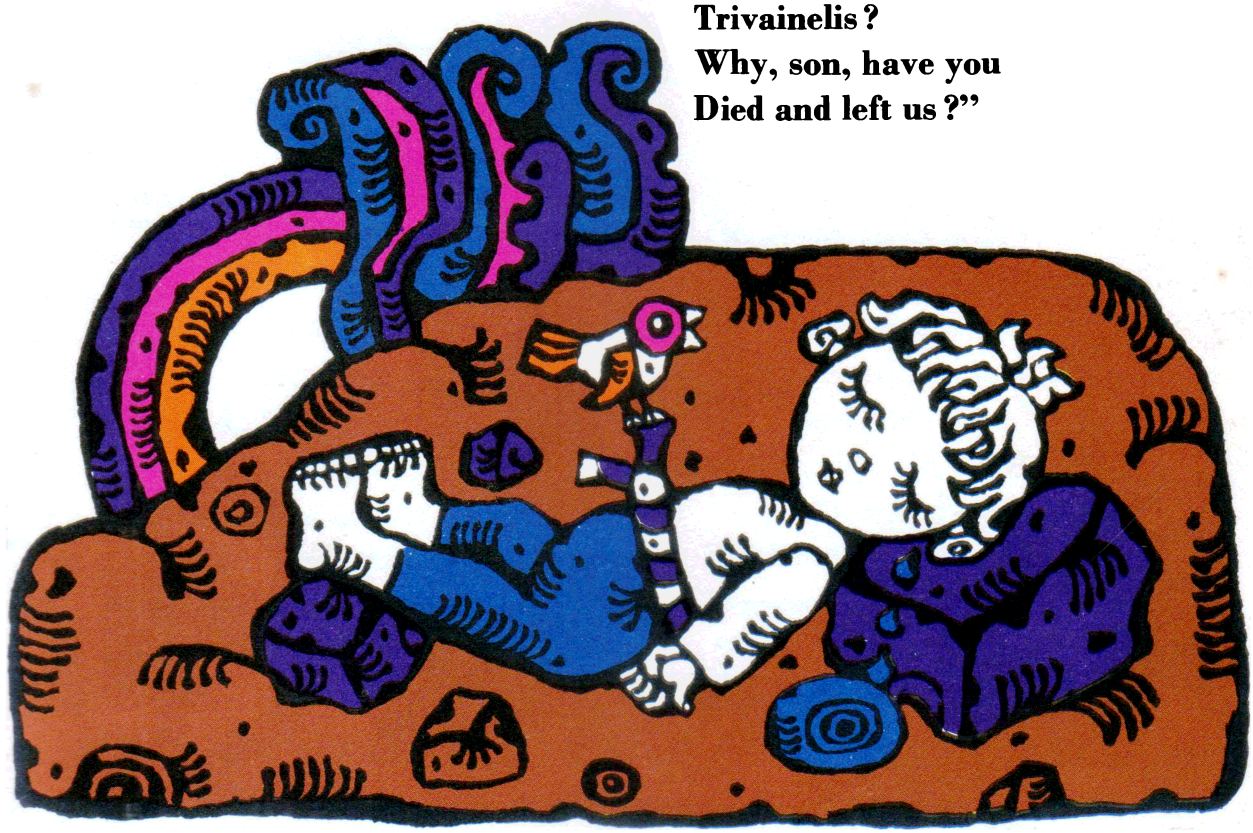
Little Wild
Strawberry
Knew him at once,
Bolted the window
And answered:
"You dunce!
Trivainelis
Does not shout.
His voice is soft
When he calls me out
To breakfast in
The morning sun."
The wolf took a
Stone to sharpen
His tongue,
And spoke again
More sweetly . . .

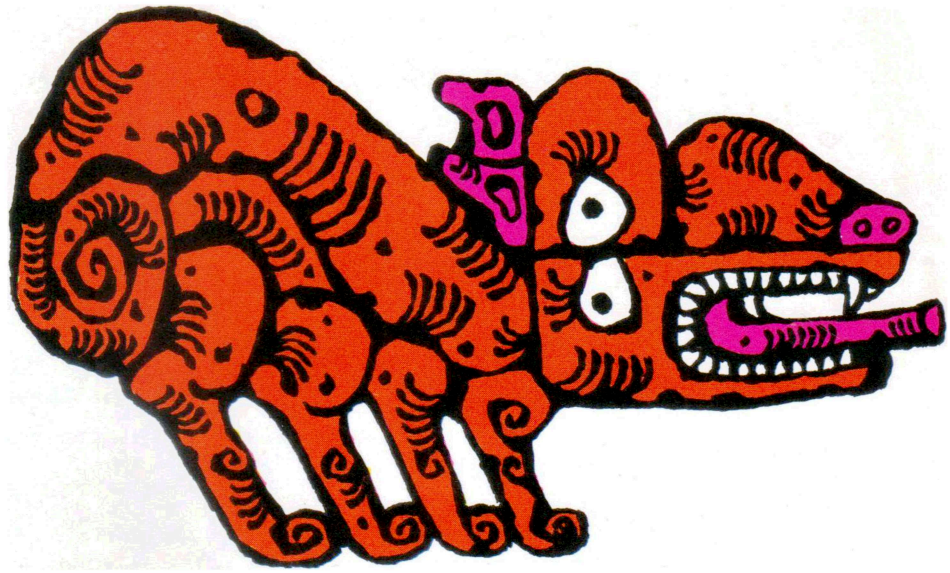
This time she set
Wide the window-pane
Then—through the door
Right fleetly—
She ran and ran
For the ferry,
But the wolf sped after
And caught her up
And ate her up
Like a berry.

*

Next morning,
Rising as the
Sun rose,
Trivainelis
Drove his sheep out,
Drove them swiftly
To the forest,
Ran to waken
Little Berry.
But the cottage
Was forsaken . . .

So distressed was
Trivainelis
That he drowned
The house with weeping,
Layed him down
Upon the threshold
And passed away there
All untimely.
His grandparents
Went out to seek him,
Sought him long,
Until they found him,
Raised him from the
Flooded threshold:
"What's the matter,
Trivainelis?
Why, son, have you
Died and left us?"





"Die I must," says
Trivainelis,
"For my heart is
Broken quite.
Grey Wolf came and
Took my playmate
Scoffed my Strawb'ry
Overnight.

A little girl—
I called her Berry—
She helped me my
Sheep to tend.
Tell me, how to
Catch old Grey Wolf,
Have his hide and
Be revenged!"
"There's no need for
That if only,"
Gran'ma said,
"You will not die.
We will do a deal
For Strawb'ry
I will bake that
Wolf a pie."
Soon the pie was
Baked and steaming,
Very savoury
The smell.
Old Grey Wolf came
Running, slavering:
"Save some pie for
Me, as well."

"Put out your tongue,
Close your eyes
And I will give you
A nice surprise."

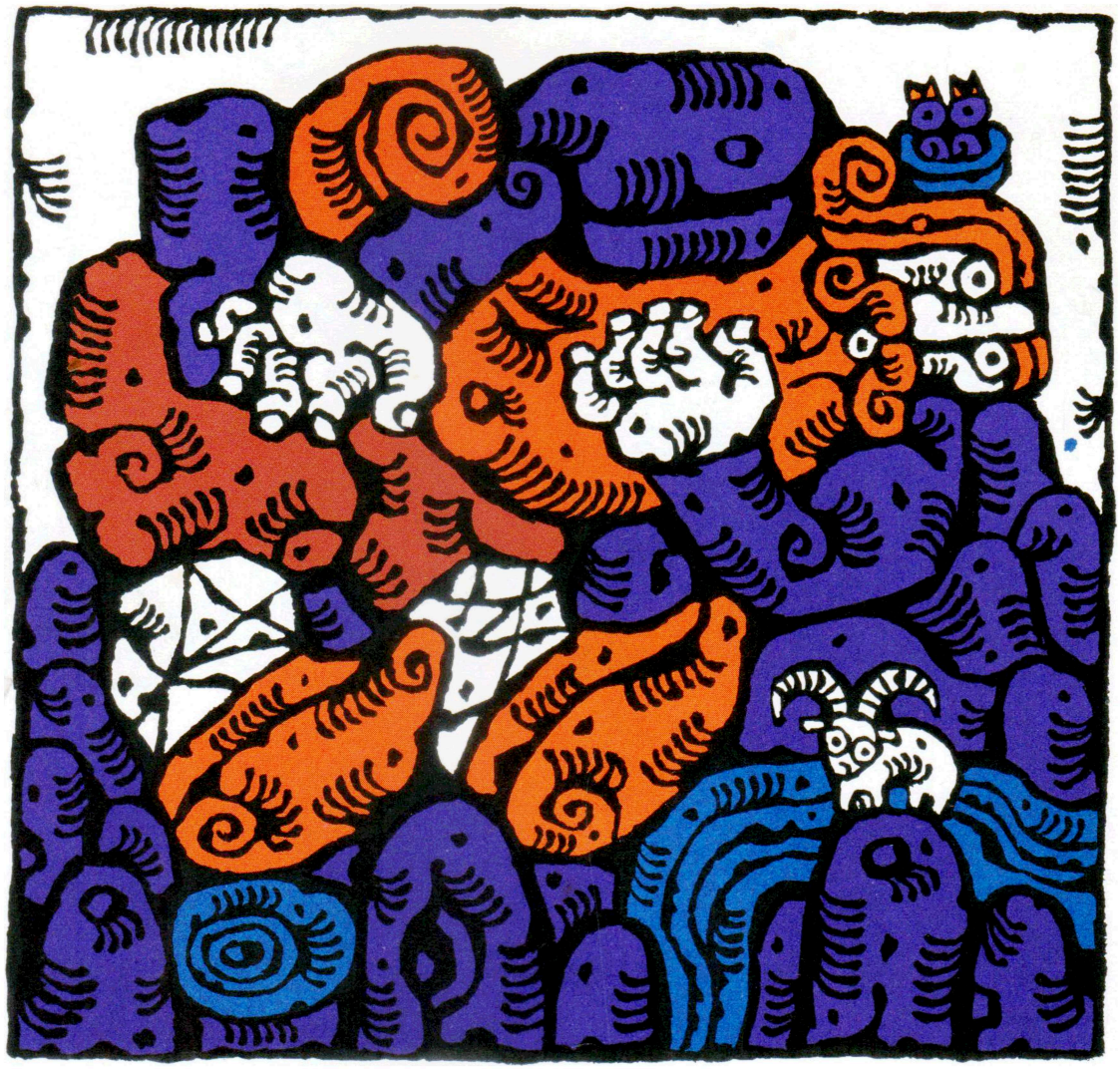
Grey Wolf shot out
A tongue like a spade.
(He just couldn't help it,
That pie smelt so good!)
Gran'ma slapped the
Pie on his tongue
Then caught it—wong!—
With the kitchen
Tongs.

"Here you will stay—
Big mouth!
Nor yet get away—
Sharp teeth!—
Until you tell
What you did
With the girl."

Trivainelis
Seized a whip,
Lashed him, slashed him,
Till he howled
And yelled for mercy
"Lawks-a-mercy!
I'll give back that
Girl," he yowled.
Out popped merry
Little Berry.
Trivainelis
Tied the wolf
To a gnarled and
Writhen pine-tree,
Where he was
Laughed at by
Little white lambs
And butted to
Death by the
Long-horned
Rams.

*

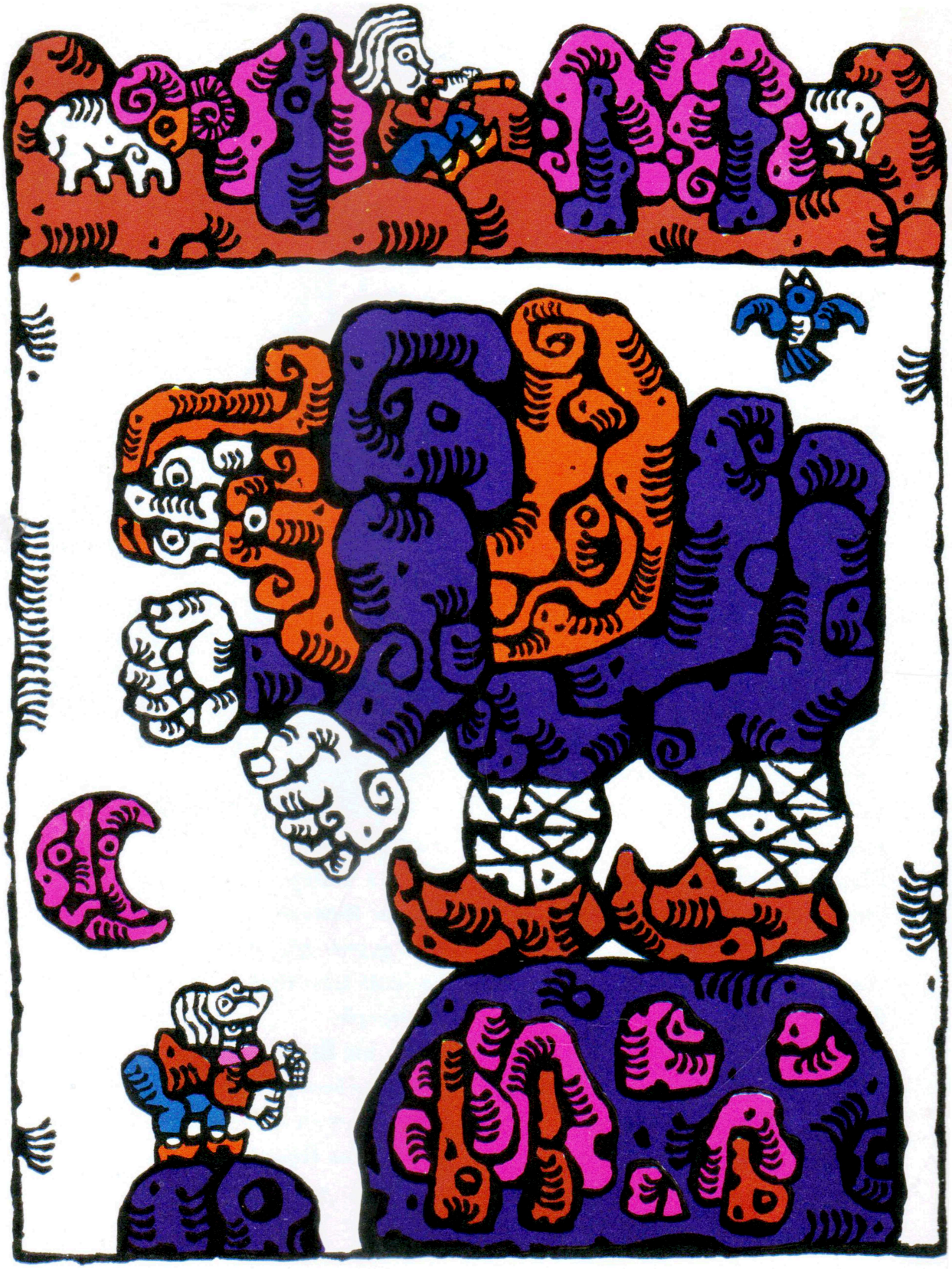
Nowadays our
Trivainelis
Rises early
With the Sun,
Drives his sheep
Across the meadow,
Through the morning
Cold doth run,
Runs to meet his
Shepherdess . . .
Bright little
Berry in her
Bright red dress.



THE GINGERBEARD GIANT

Telling tales of olden days,
Tales of black and golden days,
Gran'dad sat before the fire,
Gran'ma spun hour after hour,
I wove slippers out of bark
And listened as the day grew dark.
One such tale to you I'll tell.
Listen, children, listen well!
Once, a long, long time ago,
On a mountain-top
Where thick mists blow,
Lived a giant most horrible,
Beastly-big and terrible,
Flame-headed,
Ginger-bearded,
Clad in furs
And cloud-enshrouded,
Mossy, sleepy,
Eyes all blurred,
He sat and gloated:
"How strong I am,
How long I am,
How cunning, how clever,
The mightiest ever!"

So he sat and straddled,
His hill like a saddle
And would have grown old there
Hugging his pride,
Had he not heard
On the mountain-side
The pipes of a shepherd.
As soon as he heard
The delicate trills,
Old Flamebeard grew vexed
And leapt down the hills
With a frown on his face.
A shepherd-lad he sees
And glowers
Upon a valley
Full of flowers
And grinds his teeth
To hear him toot
So merrily
Upon his flute.
"Fee-fy-fo-fum!
Who are you that dares to come
With your flaunting pipes
And your squeaky treble?



I'll grind your bones
As I grind this pebble!"

And he crushed
A large stone
With the greatest of ease
And scattered the dust
On the upland breeze.
The lad sprang up
Brimfull of defiance:
"Come, Gingerbeard!
You can't scare me!
Have you not heard
That men such as we—
Mountain shepherds—
Are sometimes stronger
Than giants?"

"What?!" the giant's
Mouth fell open.
But the young lad
Crushed a rounded cheese
And scattered the broken
Bits on the breeze.
"There, Flamebeard,
Put that in your pipe and smoke it!
Was it you, or me,
Do you think,
That broke it?"
Flamebeard the Giant
Grew grim and gruff:
"Silence, puppy!
That's enough!
See these stones!
Who of us two
Throws higher and longer
Will be the better man
And the stronger."

The giant cast his stone—
A tremendous throw!
But the shepherd-boy too
Was far from slow.
Stealthily from
His breast he stole
A little tame lark,
Grey as a stone,
And let it fly
Straight up to the sky . . .

Flamebeard shaded
His eyes with his palm,
Staring and peering
In growing alarm.
But out of their ken
The bird had flown,
While back again
Came tumbling down
The giant's great stone!

Flamebeard twirled
His ginger whiskers,
At a loss for words,
And finally whispered:
"Well, I see you're a man.
Let's try a fight."

"I don't think I can.
You're too old for me,
But my old Gran'dad
Would be just right.
I'll lead you to him
And then you will see."
"I'll fight the old man
If you say I ought:
Is he tough enough, though,
To make me good sport?"

"Why, yes, old Flamebeard.
You'd better go steady.
He moans and he groans,
But he's always ready
For fisticuffs and wrestling,
too . . .
I'd say he was more
Than a match for you!"

The shepherd-lad ran
To rout out a bear
Asleep 'neath the pines
In his cosy lair.

"Now, old man Ginger,
Can you fell him?"
Flamebeard sprang.
The bear, to repell him,
Reared up in the heather,
Seized the giant by the shoulders
And rolled him over
Among the rocks till
He didn't know whether
He were coming or going . . .

The lad went tripping off,
Lightly skipping off,
Bravely blowing
His flute to his flocks still
Along the hillside.
The giant went stumping
Back up the rocks
To nurse his pride.

So, shepherd-lads,
Fear no
Gingerbeard Giant,
If you're bold,
Quick-witted,
And self-reliant!

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THE FROG QUEEN